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Auburn's Carnell Williams (24) and Virginia Tech's Vincent Fuller

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 5, 2005

Army preparing older vehicles for Iraq use

Fortified armored combat carriers said to be safer than Humvees Page 3



JASON CHUDY/Stars and Stripes

Time for friendliness, time for forcefulness Page 5

Spc. George Ernie, of Company B, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, stands watch with his M249 Squad Automatic Weapon as other soldiers and Iraqi National Guard troops, not shown, deliver medical supplies to a Baghdad neighborhood clinic Monday. Iraqis walked or stood nearby and watched the event. Soldiers maintained their guard but were relaxed, talking and joking. Less than 10 minutes later, however, tensions rose when they stopped at a nearby coffee shop to find out who was laying roadside bombs on the road.

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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

World

Croatia presidential election: The candidate who finished third in Croatia's weekend presidential election appeared Tuesday to the Constitutional Court, insisting that the results were rigged and that he should have had a place in the runoff.

Boris Miksic, 55, who runs a successful business in the United States, demanded that the results be annulled and the ballot repeated.

"I will fight till the end," Miksic told reporters a day after about a 1,000 of his supporters staged a protest in downtown Zagreb. "I will fight to apply the will of the people."

Trial for radical cleric: Radical Muslim cleric Abu Hamza al-Masri will stand trial beginning July 4 on charges including soliciting the murder of Jews and other non-Muslims, a judge decided Tuesday.

Judge Peter Beaumont set the date at a brief hearing at London's Central Criminal Court but did not announce where the trial would be held.

Al-Masri had been scheduled to appear via a videolink from Belmarsh high-security prison in south London, but did not.

Defense lawyer Paul Hynes said the cleric was unable to walk and referred to a "past physical difficulty."

Zimbabwe power struggle: Six provincial leaders were suspended from their posts for five years following an unprecedented power struggle within Zimbabwe's ruling party, officials said Tuesday.

The provincial party chairmen were accused last month of opposing President Robert Mugabe's choice of second vice president, a post that could place the holder in line to succeed the aging leader.

They were initially suspended for six months pending an investigation by the party's National Disciplinary Committee.

The ruling ZANU-PF party announced Tuesday that the committee had found the officials guilty of misconduct.

EU Constitution advertising blitz: The Spanish government on Tuesday unveiled an advertising blitz aimed at explaining the European constitution to the Spanish people, 90 percent of whom reportedly know little or nothing about the charter and will be the first in Europe to vote on it.

"It is true that some polls, the latest polls, have shown a desire by the Spanish people to know more about the European constitution," Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos said as he presented a campaign of newspaper ads and radio and TV commercials.

The government has recruited a pop singer, a former soccer hero and two prominent radio talk show hosts to read articles of the constitution in TV ads as it rushes to get Spain ready for a Feb. 20 referendum, the first popular vote in any EU country on the charter.

War crimes suspects: Belgrade authorities are trying to negotiate the surrender of four Serb generals sought by the U.N. war crimes tribunal, the justice minister said in comments published Tuesday.

Zoran Stojkovic told Blic daily that the talks aim to get the police and army generals to turn themselves in voluntarily and said authorities would not arrest the four de-



Pinochet indictment: Mireya Garcia, left, and Viviana Diaz, members of a Chilean group of relatives of detained and missing, embrace each other Tuesday as they celebrate at the Supreme Court building in Santiago, Chile. Chile's Supreme Court upheld the indictment and house arrest of Gen. Augusto Pinochet for nine kidnappings and one homicide during his long regime. The court's 3-2 vote set the stage for another legal battle stemming from Pinochet's 1973-1990 rule.

spite mounting international pressure on Serbia to extradite them to the tribunal in The Hague, Netherlands.

Keeping David statue clean: Italian museum specialists might install a stream of gushing air around Michelangelo's David to protect the Renaissance masterpiece from dust tracked in by tourists, an official said Monday.

A cleaning of the 500-year-old statue was completed in May, stripping away decades of grayish grime. Yet the glowing marble is constantly subjected to dirt from visitors' shoes and clothes.

One idea is a continuous gust of air to keep dust away, said Antonio Paolucci, in charge of museums in Florence.

States

Texas floods: Gov. Rick Perry's request for federal disaster aid to 13 Texas counties from November flooding has been rejected by federal officials.

The flood waters damaged more than 1,000 homes in Central and South Texas after a large area of Central Texas, already saturated by rain, received up to 10 inches of additional precipitation in a 24-hour period. Cities downstream were flooded for days.

Perry has 30 days to appeal the Federal Emergency Management Agency's ruling last week. He had asked President Bush to declare as federal disaster areas Bexar, Bristow, DeWitt, Goliad, Gonzales, Guadalupe, Hardin, Jackson, Jasper, Newton, Victoria, Wharton and Wilson counties.

Michael Jackson: The mother of a boy accusing Michael Jackson of child molestation tricked a weekly newspaper into running a story seeking donations for her son's cancer treatments, according to a TV show devoted to the legal woes of stars.

In 2000, the woman told a reporter for the Mid Valley News, a community newspaper that serves Southern California's suburban San Gabriel Valley, that her son was battling cancer and the editor agreed to print a story, Celebrity Justice reported Monday.

Human-smuggling cases: A federal appeals court has delayed the trial of a black man charged in the United States' deadliest human-smuggling attempt so it can rule on allegations of racial bias.

Tyrone Williams is accused of driving the tractor-trailer that was abandoned in May 2003 at a truck stop about 100 miles southwest of Houston. Seventeen immigrants were found dead inside the sealed trailer; two more died later.

Williams, of Schenectady, N.Y., is the only one of 14 indicted defendants who could face the death penalty if convicted.

Texas execution: Convicted killer James Porter insists he doesn't have a death wish but was volunteering for execution Tuesday evening to accept responsibility for killing another Texas prison inmate nearly five years ago.

"Stand up, face it, get over it and go on, and that's basically what I've done," Porter, 33, told The Associated Press moments from death row of his decision to forgo appeals and clear the way for his lethal injection.

Porter's execution in Huntsville would be the first of the year in the nation's most active capital punishment state, where 23 inmates were put to death in 2004. He's one of at least nine condemned men in Texas with execution dates already this year, including four in January.

Housing development arrests: Five men accused of setting fire to homes under construction in an upscale Maryland development have been indicted on federal charges, prosecutors said Monday.

The Dec. 6 fires destroyed 10 houses and damaged 16 others in the Hunters Brooke development. Damage was estimated at \$10 million.

Interim U.S. Attorney Allen Loucks said a grand jury had indicted Aaron Speed, 21; Patrick Walsh, 20; Jeremy Parson, 20; Michael Everhart, 20; and Roy McCann, 22. All were charged with arson, conspiracy to commit arson, and aiding and abetting the arsons.

Stories and photo from The Associated Press

Clarification

A story in Tuesday's editions about individuals raising money for tsunami victims contained inaccurate information. Of the \$660 and 40 euros raised at the Rhein-Main, Germany community, head bagger Yuna Cupun raised \$418.10. The remaining \$241.90 was donated by fellow baggers, commissary employees and customers. In addition, a list of those who made donations will be sent, along with the money, to the Thai Embassy in the United States.

Correction

The headline on the Reporters' Notebook in Tuesday's editions was incorrect. The DVD stalls outside of post exchanges are being closed by installation commanders or base mayors because of security concerns.

Beefed-up M113s and M577s headed for Iraq

By JOSEPH L. GALLOWAY
Knight Ridder Newspapers

WASHINGTON — The Army, beset with complaints that its troops are going into combat in inadequately armored Humvees, will send an older and less used class of armored personnel carriers to Iraq after spending \$84 million to add armor to them.

These vehicles, both veteran warhorses, are the M113A3 armored personnel carrier and the M577 command post carrier. Both will be tougher and safer than newly armored Humvees.

Army officials who pushed hard over the last two years for getting the M113 into duty in Iraq said it was more useful, cheaper and easier to transport than the

Army: Veteran warhorses safer than Humvees

Army's new wheeled Stryker armored vehicle, which also is in use in Iraq.

The Army and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld found themselves at the center of a firestorm last month over the pace of adding armor to the Humvee, a small transport vehicle that's been pressed into service in Iraq as a combat vehicle. Critics have charged that even with armor the Humvee is too easily destroyed by rocket-propelled grenades and improvised explosive devices.

An Army representative, who didn't want to be identified, said Monday that \$84 million was being spent to add armor to 734 M113A3s and M577s.

For the M113s, that includes hardened steel side armor, a "slat armor" cage that bolts to the side armor and protects against RPGs, anti-mine armor on the bottom and a new transparent bullet-proof gun shield on the top that vastly improves gunners' vision.

The M577, nicknamed the "high-top shoe" for its tall, ungainly silhouette, will get only slat armor and anti-mine armor. Its high sides can't take the steel armor without making the vehicle unstable and even more liable to roll over.

The slat-type armor essentially is a metal cage designed to detonate RPGs before they breach

the steel armor and the light aluminum wall. Similar slat armor has been added to the Stryker vehicle.

The armor kits will be produced in the United States, the Army representative said, and installed in Kuwait.

The representative said the M113 upgrade was requested by Lt. Gen. Thomas Metz, the ground commander in Iraq, and approved by Gen. George Casey, the commander of multinational forces in Iraq.

The M113 typically carries a driver, a commander and 11 infantry soldiers. It can be fitted with a .50-caliber machine gun or

a MK19 40 mm grenade launcher. The M113A3 version, introduced in 1987, has a bigger turbo-charged diesel engine, an improved transmission, steering and braking package, and inside liners to suppress spall, the superheated molten metal produced by RPG and tank-round hits. It has a range of 300 miles and a road speed of more than 40 mph. It also can swim.

More than 80,000 M113s in 28 configurations have been manufactured since they were introduced in 1960, and they still do yeoman duty in many of the world's armies.

At around 13 tons, the M113 is much easier to transport than the behemoth M1A2 Abrams tank, the Bradley Fighting Vehicle or even the wheeled Stryker.

Insurgents kill top Iraqi official

Governor of Baghdad province shot; number of U.S. wounded passes 10,000

By BASSEM MROUE
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Insurgents assassinated the highest-ranking Iraqi official in eight months Tuesday, gunning down the governor of Baghdad province and six of his bodyguards, and a suicide truck bomber killed 10 people at an interior Ministry command headquarters, the latest in a string of violence ahead of Jan. 30 elections.

Five American troops were slain in three separate attacks, officials said, in the deadliest day for the U.S. military in Iraq since a suicide bombing at a mess tent in Mosul on Dec. 21 killed 22 people, including 14 U.S. soldiers and three American contractors.

The number of U.S. troops wounded in Iraq since the start of the war in March 2003 has surpassed 10,000, the Pentagon said Tuesday in a delayed update of its casualty data. Of the 10,252 total wounded, the Pentagon said 5,396 were unable to return to duty and 4,856 sustained injuries that were light enough to allow them to resume their duties. The total is normally reported each week, but the Pentagon had not updated the figures since Dec. 22.

Tuesday's attacks, the militant group of Jordanian terrorist Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, al-Qaida in Iraq, claimed responsibility for killing Gov. al-Haidari and his bodyguards, according to a statement posted on a Web site known for carrying such claims.

"We tell every traitor and supporter of the Jews and Christians that this is your final statement," said. Its authenticity could not immediately be verified.

Iraq's insurgents repeatedly have targeted government officials and security forces, saying they are allies of the U.S.-led coalition.

More interim Iraqi government officials are saying the elections should be postponed to ensure a honest Sunni voter turnout, amid the military campaign of violence. The United States and Iraq's electoral commission, however, insist that voting take place as scheduled.

"So far, there is no postponement ... of the elections, and they will be held on Jan. 30," Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zibari told reporters. He acknowledged the vote will take place under very difficult circumstances, which will be a big challenge for all Iraqis and their government."



U.S. and Iraqi security forces gather at the scene Tuesday after a suicide driver rammed a truck packed with explosives into an Iraqi police checkpoint in western Baghdad. The attack killed 10 people and wounded 50, police said.

Al-Haidari's three-vehicle convoy was passing through Baghdad's northern neighborhood of Huriyah when unidentified gunmen opened fire, said the chief of his security detail, who asked to be identified only as Maj. Mazen.

"They came from different directions and opened fire at us," Mazen said, reached on al-Haidari's cell phone.

Al-Haidari was the target of another assassination attempt last year that killed two of his bodyguards. He is the highest-ranking Iraqi official killed since the former president of the now defunct Government Council — Abdel-Zahraa Othman, better known as Izzadine Saleem — was assassinated in May.

Al-Haidari worked closely with the U.S.-led multinational forces on rebuilding the capital. He had not always sided with the Americans, however, demanding in October that the United States leave the Green Zone, the fortified home of the U.S. Embassy and the interim Iraqi government.

On Nov. 1, al-Haidari's deputy, Hatim Kamil, was shot to death on his way to work. The Ansar al-Sunnah Army militant group claimed responsibility for that attack.

In the American deaths, a roadside bomb killed three U.S. soldiers in Baghdad, and a soldier and a Marine were killed in other attacks outside the capital, the U.S. military said.

The three soldiers killed in the capital were with Task Force Baghdad, and two soldiers were wounded in the attack, which occurred about 11 a.m., the military said.

Elsewhere, a roadside bomb attack killed one 1st Infantry Division soldier and wounded another near Balad, 50 miles north of Baghdad.

A U.S. Marine assigned to the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force was killed in action in western Iraq's restive Anbar province, which includes the former insurgent stronghold of Fallujah.

A suicide driver rammed the truck at a police checkpoint near the headquarters, which is also near an entrance of the Green Zone.

Eight Iraqi commandos and two civilians were killed, the Interior Ministry said.

U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Monday, at least 1,331 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 1,048 died as a result of hostile action, the Defense Department said. The figures include three military civilians.

The AP count is lower than the Defense Department's tally; it's not unusual for the figures to differ slightly from day to day.

The British military has reported 76 deaths. Italy has reported 19; Poland, 16; Spain, 11; Ukraine, nine; Bulgaria, seven; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each. Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary and Latvia have reported one death each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,193 U.S. military members have died, according to AP's count. That includes at least 939 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military's numbers.

The latest deaths reported by the U.S. Central Command:

■ A Marine was killed Friday in Iraq's Anbar province.

The latest identifications reported by the Defense Department:

■ Army Sgt. Damien T. Fieck, 26, Pullman, Wash.; killed Thursday by small arms fire in Baghdad; assigned to the Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 161st Infantry Regiment, Spokane, Wash.

■ Marine Lance Cpl. Jason E. Smith, 21, Phoenix; killed Friday in Iraq's Anbar province, assigned to 1st Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, Calif.

■ Army Spc. Jeff LeBrun, 21, Buffalo, N.Y.; killed Saturday by an explosive in Iraq's Anbar province, assigned to 1st Battalion, 15th Field Artillery Regiment, 10th Mountain Division, Fort Drum, N.Y.

■ Marine Lance Cpl. Brian P. Purrell, 19, West Milford, N.J.; killed Saturday in Iraq's Anbar province, assigned to Small Craft Company, Headquarters Battalion, 2nd Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Lejeune, N.C.

31st MEU members work to cut off insurgents' aid

Okinawa-based Marines tasked with dismantling fighters' support system and securing border area

BY JOSEPH GIORDONO

Stars and Stripes

AL ASAD, Iraq — Since arriving in Iraq last fall, the Okinawa-based 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit has undertaken one of the broadest missions — both in terms of responsibilities and geography — of any U.S. military unit in the country.

The unit's area of operations covers 33,000 square miles, stretching west from Ramadi to the borders of Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Its missions include tracking down insurgent fighters, securing borders, stabilizing the region ahead of national elections, providing air support, securing supply routes and patrolling the Euphrates River with a small-craft company, among others.

"The key is to disrupt the insurgents' flow. I view it as keeping them from crossing the Euphrates into the center of gravity: Baghdad, Ramadi and Fallujah," said Col. W. Lee Miller, 31st MEU commander.

One of the MEU's toughest assignments, Miller said, is patrolling and securing the vast, desert borders. The Marines work with and train Iraqi border patrols, including military and police units.

In addition to insurgents, the region is rife with trade and smuggling routes that have existed for thousands of years.

But the mission is not to stop, for example, nomadic shepherds from moving their flocks across the border.

"The things we do look for are weapons, money and military-age males who have no business being in this country," Miller said. "My job is to stop as much of that as possible."

This week, Marines from the 31st MEU targeted a series of what they call "transient camps" for foreign fighters sneaking into Iraq. The Marines arrested several suspects, seized weapons and large amounts of cash, and shut down suspected insurgent safe houses.

"The word is out that they're going to be cold and miserable. Those guys who want to get their jihad on like it's spring break won't want to do that now," Miller said. "We are better trained and more motivated. The [insurgents] will eventually be eliminated as a group that can disrupt the Iraqi government and Iraqi people."

The 31st MEU, which includes 900 Okinawa-based Marines and some 2,000 others

from California and Hawaii, has learned just how volatile their region can be.

"The atmospherics can change in 12 to 24 hours," Miller said. "For 38 years, the people here lived under a dictatorial leader. The population knows that and lived under his ruthlessness for most of their lives. It's going to take a lot of time to change."

But Miller says he sees encouraging signs that lasting progress has been made. At vehicle checkpoints just after New Year's, Marine civil affairs units spoke with local residents to gauge their feelings on the situation.

While some said the insurgency and continued fighting were beginning to take a psychological toll, others reported that local religious leaders were starting to preach support for U.S.-led forces, Miller said.

"That is the change in atmospherics that I wanted. These people realize the best way is to support the multinational forces until they can get their own security forces on the feet and every day I see positive changes in the [Iraqi National Guard]," he said.

"I attribute that to rooting out the bad guys in the area. These day goes by that we don't have a success out here, whether big or small."

Indeed, the 31st MEU has captured more than two dozen fighters in recent weeks and seized several large caches of weapons.

But those successes have not come without a heavy price. Since arriving in Iraq last fall, the 31st MEU has suffered 21 combat deaths and nearly 150 Marines have been wounded in action.

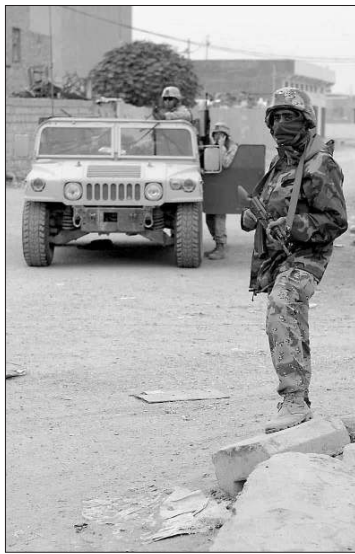
Gunnery Sgt. Troy Bruss, 31st MEU chief of operations, said Marines here face a full range of attacks: direct small-arms fire, indirect fire such as mortars and rockets, roadside bombs, car bombs, suicide attacks and land mines.

In some areas, the form of attacks depends "on what part of the month it is," said Bruss, a 39-year-old from Bondeul, Wis.

arrested late last week. "A number have been released after investigation."

Bruss would not say how many remained in military custody. Nor would he identify the troops they were suspected of plotting against. But the targeted troops are believed to be Al Qaeda.

The United States stations several thousand troops in Kuwait and used the small country to launch



PHOTOS BY J.D. CRESS/Courtesy of the U.S. Marine Corps

Mustaf al-Fiyar, a member of Iraqi Specialized Special Forces, stands roadside security with Marines of Company A, 1st Battalion, 23rd Marines, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit during a daytime patrol through the small Iraqi town of Ar Rutbah on Dec. 4.

One route has earned the nickname "Mine Alley" because of the insurgents' tactic of digging up and reburial land mines at different locations, sometimes

sleep. "They are doing a great job. We can't ask anything more of them," Bruss said.

The unit has had its Iraq deployment extended once, now putting it on schedule to return to Okinawa around March.

"It has been an honor and is an honor to serve with these men and women. They are extremely selfless and believe in what they are doing. Not one has ever dropped his or her pack."

Miller said, emphasizing the importance of building on the work done so far.

"If we let our guard down, it can change in a matter of 24 hours. We are obsessed with not losing the positive ground that we have gained since getting here."

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"Those guys who want to get their jihad on like it's spring break won't want to do that now."

Col. W. Lee Miller
31st MEU commander

even triggering them from under paved roads. Another intersection is called "IED Corner," using the now-ubiquitous military acronym for improvised explosive device.

The Marines, living at relatively Spartan camps in a largely barren area, have become used to 18-hour duty days, which often stretch into two days without

its March 2003 invasion of Iraq. Kuwait continues to serve as a staging ground for U.S. troops and equipment going into Iraq.

"It is just an investigation," al-Mullah said. "The military judicial proceedings will take their course."

Al-Mullah gave no further details.

The U.S. Embassy in Kuwait warned American citizens Dec.

15 that it had "credible information that terrorist groups are developing near-term plans for attacks against unspecified targets in Kuwait." The embassy urged nationals to exercise caution and report any suspicious activity.

Kuwait has stepped up its internal security in recent days, stationing armed military and police vehicles at street junctions, hotels and embassies.



Marine Cpl. Timothy Failey, a CH-46 Sea Knight crew chief with the Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron-265, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, scans the skies during a flight over the Iraqi desert last month.

Kuwait: Up to 4 soldiers arrested for plotting attacks

The Associated Press

KUWAIT CITY — Kuwait has arrested up to four members of its armed forces who are suspected of plotting to attack allied troops, a Kuwaiti military spokesman said Monday.

Kuwait has witnessed a number of small-scale attacks on U.S. troops and civilians in the past three years. But this is the first

time in many years that serving members of the armed forces have been detained on such charges.

"The security apparatus in Military Intelligence is investigating some officers following information that they intended to work against friendly troops," Brig. Youssef al-Mullah said.

"They are fewer than five," al-Mullah said, adding they were

arrested late last week. "A number have been released after investigation."

Bruss would not say how many remained in military custody. Nor would he identify the troops they were suspected of plotting against. But the targeted troops are believed to be Al Qaeda.

The United States stations several thousand troops in Kuwait and used the small country to launch

Two-sided tasks for troops in Iraq

On recent patrol, GIs balance humanitarian delivery with searches

BY JASON CHUDY

Stars and Stripes

BAGHDAD — Soldiers from Company B, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment have been both humanitarian and authoritarian during their time in Iraq.

During a two-hour mission Monday with the Iraqi National Guard, the soldiers delivered hospital supplies to a southern Baghdad clinic, and then tried to sweat out information from residents of another neighborhood about who was planting roadside bombs near one of their main patrol routes.

For the first part of the patrol, soldiers helped carry in equipment, chairs and a refrigerator as medical staff in white smocks watched peacefully. The soldiers on guard by their vehicles remained vigilant but were relaxed, even as a handful of area residents gathered to watch.

"We knew that when we were at the clinic, the area's relatively calm," said Sgt. 1st Class John Shatto, 3rd Platoon sergeant. "We know they weren't actively trying to blow us up."

Less than five minutes after leaving the clinic, however, the soldiers' attitudes changed. Gone were the smiles, jokes and relaxed demeanors.

"We adjust to the situation at the snap of a finger," said Shatto.

Somewhere between the clinic and the coffee shop, that finger snapped.

The soldiers purposefully marched into the shop. Dominos flew, tea spilled and shouts reverberated off the dirty white walls as soldiers tried to find out who had been setting roadside bombs, known to troops as improvised explosive devices, or IEDs.

"We had accurate intelligence that people at the coffee shop knew who planted IEDs there," Shatto said.

"We adjust to the situation at the snap of a finger."

Sgt. 1st Class John Shatto

During the last attack on a U.S. patrol, the shop and a few others had been uncharacteristically closed. Whether or not they were responsible for the bombs, the shop owners knew something was going to happen and could possibly provide information to stop further attacks.

Other soldiers visited a nearby barbershop and a small garage where two Iraqis worked on a dusty white sedan.

Gathering back in front of the coffeehouse, soldiers stormed their way up a flight of stairs into a handful of apartments. As is almost always the case, none of the residents admitted knowing anything.

On the roof, however, they found a fist-size hole chiseled out of the base of a wall that faced the street. Looking through the hole, a soldier stated that it looked straight down on the spot where the last roadside bomb had gone off. Insurgents had probably used the roof to trigger the bomb.

To prevent the site from being used again, soldiers broke open that part of the wall, with large pieces crashing into a trash bin three stories below.

"Company policy is to use minimum force to accomplish the mission," Shatto said. "Some companies and platoons find it easy, but some have a hard time turning it off."

Knowing how to react appropriately to the situation is something each soldier must learn during his time in Iraq.

"It gets taught, but it boils down to situational awareness," Shatto said.

Less than 20 minutes later, the finger snapped again.

The soldiers reboarded their vehicles and made a two-minute drive to the nearby Al Daura power plant. There, they were again all smiles and jokes after the promotion ceremony for a fellow soldier.

"We have to know when to turn that switch on and when to turn it off," said Shatto. "It would be counterproductive to keep it on all the time."

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GI who balked at orders gets year in prison

Stars and Stripes

A Kitzingen, Germany-based soldier will serve 12 months in prison after pleading guilty Nov. 29 of charges that included dereliction of duty, malingering and destruction of government property.

According to a case summary released by the Tiktik, Iraq-based Task Force Danger, Pvt. Evol Sutton, 20, of the 701st Main Support Battalion, also was convicted of disrespect for a noncommissioned officer and disorderly conduct in connection with incidents last summer at Forward Operating Base Speicher, Iraq. Judge (Col.) Stephanie Browne also fined him \$795 a month for 12 months, ordered him demoted to the lowest enlisted rank and handed him a bad-conduct discharge.

According to the prosecutors' summary, Sutton balked at performing extra duty and discipline during his tour in July and violated Army rules when he then chomped a round in his M16A2 rifle.

Over the next two weeks, a mental health physician examined Sutton and determined that, although the soldier was suffering from depression, he was faking mental illness to avoid duty.

When told August that the doctor did not support his wish to be chapered out of the Army, Sutton became angry, knocking over a water cooler and wall lockers and breaking a truck window in his unit's motor pool, according to the trial summary.

Soldier gets 6 months for shooting self

Stars and Stripes

A Kitzingen, Germany-based soldier who shot himself in a leg in October with a contraband Iraqi handgun has been sentenced to six months in prison.

Spc. Kenneth Perkins, 25, of the 4th Battalion, 3rd Air Defense Artillery, pleaded guilty Nov. 30 to charges of malingering, making a false official statement and violating a lawful general order, according to a court-martial summary released Friday by the Tiktik, Iraq-based Task Force Danger.

Judge (Col.) Stephanie Browne also ordered him reduced to the lowest enlisted rank and handed him a bad-conduct discharge.

Perkins acknowledged keeping an Iraqi handgun he found near a mosque, a violation of the 1st Infantry Division's General Order No. 1. He also admitted that, on Oct. 23, he used it to shoot himself in the left calf while on a break from his job at the Forward Operating Base Danger mayor's cell.

According to the summary, Perkins returned to his unit and told his superiors he had been shot from outside the base's perimeter by an Iraqi man dressed in black. The report, which Perkins later said he had made up, prompted an intense search for the gunman.



Snow in Afghanistan shortens patrol for U.S. troops

Above: Maj. Dan Wilson, operations officer for the 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment — the "Wolfhounds" — practices his Pashtu with Afghan kids during a New Year's Day patrol in Wurjuna, Afghanistan. Soldiers plowed through more than a foot of snow to deliver humanitarian assistance to this village in northeastern Paktika province. The mission was supposed to visit two other villages, but the road became impassable after 14 inches of snow fell over the previous five days.

Right: A soldier provides security during the patrol.

PHOTOS BY BRADLEY RHEN
Courtesy of the U.S. Army



Issues new sexual assault policy

BY LISA BURGESS

Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON, Va. — The Defense Department issued a new sexual assault policy Tuesday that will replace the services' four ways of handling such attacks with a common standard, as well as offer more confidentiality for the victims, officials said.

"We are taking fragmented programs and putting them into one cohesive program," Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness David Chu told Pentagon reporters Tuesday.

Chu said the new policy is made up of 11 directives ranging from how complaints are investigated to better care for victims.

One key directive within the

new policy, Chu said, is the creation at every installation and deployment location of a "Sexual Assault Response Coordinator," or SARC, who will be responsible for monitoring every report of assault from start to finish, as well as informing victims of their options for care and possible prosecution of their attackers.

Another key directive, said Air Force Brig. Gen. K.C. McClain, who heads the joint sexual assault prevention task force, is "training, training, training," throughout servicemembers' careers.

But ultimately, the key will be making servicemembers feel comfortable about reporting sexual crimes, Chu said.

Fear that reporting sexual assault will damage reputations and

careers "is a proven barrier that victims carry," Chu said.

Victims also fear repercussions for violations they may have committed before or during an assault, such as excess drinking, Chu acknowledged.

"To the extent possible, commanders should delay the determination of disciplinary actions for a victim's collateral misconduct related to the circumstances of an alleged sexual assault" until the final disposition is completed, the directive says.

The 2005 defense budget authorization ordered the Defense Department to develop and deliver a new sexual assault prevention policy by Jan. 1.

In response to that order, the policy's 11 directives have been

sent to Congress and to all four services, Chu said.

Now it will be up to a Joint Task Force Sexual Assault Prevention and Response, which has members from all the services, to flesh out and implement all the directives, McClain said.

Sexual assault in the military has been a growing issue since the war on terror began; reports came in that women in Iraq and Kuwait were being assaulted by other deployed servicemembers.

The Defense Department "understands our traditional system does not afford" sexual assault victims with the care and treatment they need, Chu said.

Last February, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld ordered the Defense Department to conduct a 90-day study on how sexual

assault victims are treated in the military.

The report, released in April, recommended the creation of a single place within DOD that would oversee sexual assault responses, Chu said.

The result was the Joint Task Force Sexual Assault Prevention and Response, which developed a new policy "that will ensure... that the same support system so all assault cases are responded to appropriately and in a timely manner," Chu said.

But it might take several years for all the policies to be implemented, according to McClain.

"There is no silver bullet," she told reporters Tuesday. "It will take time" to implement all the directives.

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Seabees left with Fallujah cleanup

BY SCOTT SCHONAUER

Stars and Stripes

More than a month after a U.S.-led assault against Iraqi insurgents in Fallujah, residents are returning to a city still in ruins.

Standing water remains on some streets. Downed power lines are draped over buildings and across alleyways. Piles of garbage and rubble litter the streets.

The overwhelming job of cleaning up the city and restoring basic services, such as water and electricity, lies in the hands of the Navy Seabees with Naval Mobile Construction Battalion Four, along with Iraqi contractors.

Hard work is nothing new to the Navy's construction workers, but even they admit that helping rebuild the city is a monumental task that will take time. "Well, we're pretty good at what we do," Chief Petty Officer William Wright, a builder with the Port Hueneque, Calif.-based battalion, said in a telephone interview. "We've got a lot of this debris out of the road. We're clearing the roads. But we're taking it one step at a time right now."

Sweeping the streets clean of the muck and debris continues to be one of the top priorities in addition to helping deliver humanitarian aid to the thousands of residents returning to the war-torn town.

Petty Officer 1st Class Sean Stewart, a utilitiesman with Naval Mobile Construction Battalion Four, compared the mess to the swath of destruction left by a high-powered hurricane.

Since Dec. 3, the Seabees have pumped 60 million gallons of water out of the city. But the job isn't done, yet.

Some parts of the city are below the water table and pumps are required to keep water at bay. But during the conflict, many of the pumps didn't work or were deliberately turned off, flooding the streets with water. The standing water has only made clearing the debris and rubble that much harder.

"Hurricane Andrew when it hit Miami in the early '90s would be a pretty good description of the level of debris," Stewart said. "The buildings themselves are pretty much still structurally sound, still standing."

Destruction in some parts of the city are a lot worse than others. Areas where insurgents hid from coalition forces got the brunt of the operation's brute force to kick them out of town or kill them.

"Those parts of the city were struck harder than others," Wright said. "There are parts of the city that look pretty good, while others are pretty much destroyed."

The battalion's Seabees arrived in August and immediately boosted force protection for Camp Fallujah, where many Marines and unit members call home in Iraq. The unit has small detachments spread out across the country supporting Marine units. The battalion also has Seabees deployed to Rota, Spain, and across Europe.



PHILIP FORRESTER/Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

Sean Stewart, of NMCC 4, works hard to keep this pump station running. It supplies water to Camp Fallujah and many nearby farms.

Although helping rebuild Fallujah is a tremendous chore, Seabees have noticed a precipitous drop in the number of insurgent attacks. Before the operation, members of the battalion came under attack almost daily from roadside bombs and small-arms fire. On Sept. 4, 2004, Petty Officer 2nd Class Eric Lyle Knott, a steelworker with the battalion, was killed in a mortar attack at Camp Fallujah.

"We still get some small-arms fire, but not as much," Wright said. "Not nearly as much [improvised explosive devices] and not near as many mortar attacks."

After finishing pumping out the water from the streets and clearing the debris, Iraqi contractors and Seabees will focus on restoring electricity. In the next couple of weeks, the battalion will help build polling stations and provide support for elections scheduled Jan. 30.

A typical Seabee with the battalion works as many as 14 hours a day, seven days a week. One of the biggest challenges is making sure sailors get a break once in awhile so they stay mentally and physically sharp, Wright said.

"The work is good," Wright said. "[I'm] proud to be here helping the Iraqis. I just hope it all works out in the end."

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CNO wants more skilled, efficient Navy workforce

Clark releases annual report outlining goals

BY LEO SHANE III

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Chief of Navy Operations Adm. Vern Clark said he wants to create a more skilled and efficient naval workforce

but insists that doesn't mean a 1990s-style slowdown.

"We will invest whatever it takes for the growth and development of the people we need but not one thin dime for people we don't need," he said.

"Sixty-plus percent of the resources we have are going to pay for people. ... If you jam more people into the task, and don't change the output, you have added to the cost and you're less productive."

The comments came as Clark released his annual report outlining goals for the Navy, which includes recruiting more college-educated people, providing more training to sailors and Navy civilians, and better coordinating the responsibilities of the active and reserve components.

Clark said he does not anticipate shrinking the number of Navy personnel to create a more efficient service, but did say he's "on a campaign to get rid of the not-rated people in the Navy."

Those not-rated sailors, who often enter the service from jobs like firefighters or police officers, lack any specific skill set, according to CNO spokesman Cmdr.

Denny Moynihan. Clark said in the future every sailor should have a clear career path and set of desirable skills, like a major corporation would demand of its workforce.

"I don't want people to view this as a slowdown because this isn't a slowdown thing," he said. "This is a 'run the company smarter' thing."

Navy officials over the next five months will develop a more comprehensive report on improving the service's overall skills and manpower.

Clark also plans on conducting a new Sea Swap experiment this year, despite criticism over the Navy's decision to rotate crews on the USS Fletcher while stationed in Western Australia instead of returning the ship to the United States.

"Leading change is one of the hardest things in the world to do," he said. "I expect people to react to something like Sea Swap, because it's change. ... But this is a very effective way to operate the force."

Clark would not comment on rumors that the Navy will suffer heavy cuts in the Pentagon's 2006 budget proposal, and would not speculate as to how the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure would change the service.

But he did say officials will look for more cooperation between Navy and Marine operations, especially in areas where they have neighboring facilities.

Clark's report also set goals of reducing drug and alcohol incidents among servicemembers by 25 percent this year and establishing housing for sailors in port by 2006.

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Jury chosen for GI charged in drowning of Iraqi

BY ANGELA K. BROWN

The Associated Press

FORT HOOD, Texas — A six-man jury was selected Tuesday for the military trial of a soldier accused in the drowning death of an Iraqi civilian, and opening statements were scheduled to begin later in the afternoon.

Army Sgt. 1st Class Tracy Perkins, of the 4th Infantry Division, is charged with involuntary manslaughter, conspiracy, aggravated assault, obstruction of justice and lying to investigators.

Perkins, 33, and Army 1st Lt. Jack Saville are accused of ordering soldiers to push two Iraqis into the Tigris River in January 2004 for violating curfew. Zaidoun Fadel Hassoun, 19, allegedly drowned. Saville's attorneys contend he safely reached shore.

There was a pool of 10 potential jurors, all soldiers, but a judge dismissed four.

Two were removed after questioning about appropriate punishment if Perkins is convicted. The sentencing range if convicted on all counts is nothing to 29 years. Both potential jurors said Perkins would have difficulty staying in



U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Tracy Perkins, left, and his attorney, Capt. Joshua Norris, leave a hearing in July in Fort Carson, Colo., which determined a court-martial should be held for Perkins in the alleged drowning of an Iraqi. A jury was selected Tuesday in the case, and opening statements were scheduled for the afternoon.

the Army if convicted.

The judge also removed a potential juror who prosecutors said knew too much about the case. There was no reason given for the

fourth dismissal.

Prosecutors had asked whether the potential jurors, most of whom had served in Iraq, had had experiences there that would

affect their partiality. Some witnesses in the case are Iraqis.

Defense attorneys asked whether anyone convicted should automatically be discharged if convicted

ed, and whether they would consider Perkins' character and military service as part of his defense.

Perkins and Saville each face an assault charge pertaining to Marwan Fadel Hassoun, who says his cousin died just out of his reach. The two soldiers are part of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team out of Fort Carson, Colo., which is part of the 4th Infantry.

Saville, the platoon's leader and a 24-year-old West Point graduate, faces the same charges as his trial set for March. His trial was postponed last month after a judge ordered the victim's body to be exhumed for an autopsy and positive identification.

The judge approved the request by Saville's attorneys, who claim the victim may still be alive but that if he is dead, he did not die at the hands of U.S. soldiers.

At a July hearing at Fort Carson, investigators acknowledged they never saw a body, that they instead relied on the word of relatives and a family videotape showing a corpse in a coffin.

Saville and Perkins also face a second assault charge for allegedly forcing another Iraqi man off a bridge over the Tigris in December 2003 near Balad.

Father and son Marines ready to deploy to Iraq in same unit

BY JOHN HANNA

The Associated Press

SILVER LAKE, Kan. — During his 2003 tour in Iraq, Maj. Christopher Phelps sent home a picture from Baghdad, showing him standing in front of a bombed-out building and holding a handmade sign that said, "Dad, wish you were here."

The Marine Corps is about to oblige.

Both 34-year-old Phelps and his 57-year-old father, Kendall Phelps, have orders to report to Camp Lejeune, N.C., for training, then deploy to Iraq for a seven-month tour.

They'll serve in the same unit, helping Iraqi officials rebuild their nation.

Both men will leave families behind. Kendall Phelps in Silver Lake, a small town northwest of Topeka, and Christopher Phelps, in Shawnee, a Kansas City suburb. Asked about such other safety, both said they trust their fellow Marines.

"In the Marine Corps, every Marine watches every Marine," Kendall Phelps said.

Still, Kendall Phelps' wife, Sherma, remembered her husband's concerns early in 2003, during their son's first tour. She said he would replace his son there, or at least be with him to provide protection.

"Now they're both going to be there, so I can just worry about both of them," she said.

The Marines don't keep records on how many fathers and sons serve in the same unit, but



Kendall Phelps, left, and his son, Maj. Christopher Phelps — in December at the Marine Corps Reserve center in Kansas City, Mo. — are set to deploy to Iraq in February or March and will serve together as part of the 200th-member 5th Civil Affairs Group.

it's rare, said Capt. Jeff Landis, a spokesman for the Corps in Quantico, Va.

As part of the 200-member 5th Civil Affairs Group, the Phelpses will help Iraqi officials restart school systems, re-establish local governments, train police and repair infrastructure, said the unit's commanding officer, Col. Steve McKinley. That job can't be done until an area is reasonably secure, he said.

Christopher Phelps has four sons, ages 18 months to 6 years. The youngest, Taigan, was born shortly after his father's return from his first tour in Iraq.

Kendall Phelps, a retired master gunnery sergeant, has two daughters and three sons, including Christopher, ages 19 to 34.

Kendall Phelps left active duty in 1968 but later joined the reserves. After Sept. 11, 2001, he put his name on a list of retirees who wanted to return to active duty.

Christopher Phelps also joined the Marines out of high school, serving in his father's reserve unit while attending the University of Kansas. Commissioned as a second lieutenant in 1994, he spent five years on active duty. He went back into the reserves until the terrorist attacks led him to again seek active duty.

Article 32s begin for two SEALs accused of abusing detainees

BY SETH HETTENA

The Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — One is accused of punching an Iraqi prisoner.

Another faces allegations that he kicked, choked and humiliated captives.

Both Navy lieutenants are facing Article 32 hearings this week, the military equivalent of a civilian grand jury.

The first hearing was set to begin Tuesday, the second Thursday.

Both were delayed for weeks, in part because of concerns about classified information available to defense attorneys involved in the case.

The Navy has not released the names of the officers, who are both members of the Coronado, Calif.-based Sea, Air, Land unit known as SEAL Team 7.

The officer scheduled to appear at Tuesday's hearing was accused of punching Mandel Al-Jamadi and allowing other Navy personnel to abuse the prisoner, according to a charge sheet released by the Navy.

Al-Jamadi, a suspect in the bombing of a Red Cross facility, was captured by SEALs in November 2003 during a joint special forces-CIA mission, and died a short time later at Abu Ghraib prison.

Frank Spinner, a civilian defense attorney, said Monday he would file a formal objection to the proceeding because he cannot attend and the Navy has refused to grant a delay. Spinner

said he has been summoned for jury duty in Colorado, where he lives.

Under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, the accused SEAL is entitled to civilian defense counsel. "If they proceed without me, a judge in several months may order them to go back and do another Article 32 hearing," Spinner said.

On Thursday, the other lieutenant will face allegations that he kicked, choked and twisted the testicles on prisoners in Iraq in incidents from October 2003 to April 2004, according to his charge sheet. He is also accused of putting a pumpkin mask on a prisoner's face in November 2003 and taking pictures.

The charges against the two lieutenants include dereliction of duty, maltreatment, assault and conduct unbecoming of an officer.

Both men are accused of posing in photos in which Al-Jamadi was abused, according to the April of this year, one of the lieutenants allegedly told members of his platoon "it was not smart to have pictures of prisoners," according to the charge sheet.

Navy lawyers will hear the evidence against both SEALs and make a recommendation to Rear Adm. Joseph Maguire, the top SEAL. Maguire will make a final decision on whether to convene a court-martial.

Eight other uniformed members of SEAL Team 7 also face criminal charges following an investigation into allegations of detainee abuse.

IN THE WORLD

Relief crews face scenes of despair

BY JULIANA GITTLER

Stars and Stripes

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia — Striking images of disaster color the experience of servicemenbers working in the aftermath of last week's earthquake and deadly tsunami in South Asia.

Flying over Indonesia in a Navy helicopter, Petty Officer 1st Class Rob Bywater saw entire towns wiped out along the coast.

"When you flew over all you could see is a mosque. You literally saw hundreds of foundations and nothing else," he said.

Navy helicopter crewman Petty Officer 2nd Class David Matthews described the despair as "biblical in proportion."

On the ground in Banda Aceh, one of the hardest-hit areas, Marine Capt. Andrew Rice from the defense attaché office in Jakarta saw bodies piled along the river like floating rubble.

"It looks like a huge amount of debris and then you look closer and it's just dozens and dozens of bodies," he said. "When you're over there and see it, you just can't believe it."

About a thousand servicemenbers are on the ground in Thailand, Indonesia and Sri Lanka helping in the relief effort; thousands more are offshore in ships. Air Force C-130s are moving supplies into the area so Navy SH-60B Seahawks from the USS Abraham Lincoln Carrier group can ferry them to remote villages.

A dozen Seahawks are moving about 25,000 pounds of relief supplies a day, bringing Indonesian medical teams into remote areas and evacuating dozens of wounded refugees, said Cmdr. Ted Williams, the executive officer of Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron (VAQ) 131, part of Carrier Air Wing 2 from the Everett, Wash.-based Lincoln.

Sailors throughout the ship volunteered to fly out to airstrips each morning to load and unload supplies onto the helicopters all day.

Aboard the helicopters, crewmen see the devastation.

"I still can't believe what happened," said Petty Officer 2nd Class Gilbert Salinas, a rescue swimmer. "You just see where towns used to be. The foundations are still there but the rest is in ruins."

At several villages, helicopters dropped boxes down to surging crowds struggling to reach the aid. In one location, a man crawled through mud, gripping remaining plant roots to brace against the rotor wash so he could be able to reach a box of supplies.

"If you throw out a sandwich they'll fight over it. These people are hungry," Matthews said. "When they saw the helo, it gave them a sense of hope."

At other locations, the constancy of drops of boxes of relief aid have piled up in places such as Bangkok, Thailand and Jakarta

U.S. military aid

The U.S. military is providing assistance to the victims of the earthquake and tsunami in South Asia. Here's a snapshot of U.S. military operations so far:

Personnel

There are 13,003 U.S. Navy, Marine, Army, Air Force and Coast Guard servicemenbers involved in providing relief support.

Currently on ground: 1402

Thailand 1001
Sri Lanka 167
Indonesia 127
Malaysia 107

Currently aboard: 11,601

Ships

13 U.S. Navy ships
6 Maritime prepositioning ships
1 U.S. Coast Guard vessel

Aircraft

16 C-130 medium lift cargo aircraft
9 P-3 reconnaissance aircraft
4 KC-135 medium lift/refueling aircraft

46 helicopters are in the region
17 helicopters from USS Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group
25 helicopters from USS Bonhomme Richard Expeditionary Strike Group
4 force-based helicopters

Level of effort to date:

At least 460,000 pounds of relief supplies delivered:
■ 316,664 pounds water
■ 135,102 pounds food
■ 8,246 pounds medical supplies (nonmedicines)

Source: U.S. Department of Defense Stars and Stripes

as well as remote airstrips, where a lack of space for aircraft, ground crew and simple pallets and forklifts has slowed the distribution process. U.S. military aircraft mingle with civilian and military planes from around the world.

"All these places are maxed out," said Air Force 1st Lt. KC York, a C-130 pilot with the 36th Expeditionary Airlift Wing from Yokota Air Base, Japan.

Military aircraft have begun bringing in pallets, forklifts and trucks to expedite the distribution in Indonesia, where boxes of relief supplies are piling up alongside the runway.

"It feels like the logjam is breaking open and aid is getting in," said Tim Gerhardt, assistant press attaché at the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta. "We're in high gear now and everything is moving."

Military officials anticipate the relief effort will last for months. Once aid distribution is flowing consistently, sailors from the ships and civil affairs soldiers will begin reconstruction efforts, officials said.

For servicemenbers such as Matthews, the effort is worth long hours of constant flying.

"I don't want to go back to the ship. I wish I could fly more to the aid. I don't see the so much to be done."

Jim Schulz contributed to this story.

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JIM SCHULZ/Stars and Stripes

A crowd of people desperate for relief reaches out toward a Navy SH-60B Seahawk delivering aid to Kouati Sounam, Indonesia. As part of the massive relief effort, U.S. military helicopters and planes are distributing relief to isolated and starving communities in Indonesia and Sri Lanka devastated by the series of tsunamis.

Washed-out roads, cows on runway slowing aid efforts

BY LELY T. DJUHARI

The Associated Press

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia — The main airport at Indonesia's tsunami-battered Sumatra island was closed for much of the day Tuesday after a relief plane hit a herd of cows, hampering the world's still-fragile efforts to get aid to victims of the disaster.

In a startling tale of survival, an Indonesian man swept off the shore by last week's tsunami was found alive on tree branches and debris, the second person to be found alive on the high seas days after the disaster, officials said.

World leaders, meanwhile, headed to southern Asia to get a firsthand glimpse of the damage from the Dec. 26 earthquake and tsunami that killed at least 139,880 people. Secretary of State Colin Powell — who was in Thailand on Tuesday — pledged America's full support, and a

donor conference was scheduled Thursday in Indonesia's capital.

Powell said Tuesday the outpouring of American aid and humanitarian help in the region devastated by the tsunami may also help Muslim nations see the United States in a better light.

"What it does in the Muslim world, the rest of the world is giving an opportunity to see American generosity, American values in action," Powell said after meeting with Hassan Wirayudis, his Indonesian counterpart.

Relief workers said they expect the death toll to soar by tens of thousands because surveys of the western coast of Sumatra, which was closest to the quake, show it was hit much harder than previously thought. Scores of villages were flattened, and in some areas few survivors have been seen.

In Washington, the State Department said 16 Americans — eight in Thailand and eight in Sri

Lanka — died in the disaster. The number of U.S. fatalities had stood at 15 for several days.

Rushing aid to anyone still alive has proved difficult, with roads and sea jetties washed away.

"We have a logistical nightmare," U.N. humanitarian chief Jan Egeland told NBC's "Today" show. "I would say that tens of thousands of people have received no relief," he said, adding that the outpouring of aid has "been just phenomenal."

Planes were temporarily grounded Tuesday by the closure of the small airport in Banda Aceh, the main city on the island's northern tip. The flying was left to helicopters, mainly based on U.S. Navy vessels anchored offshore, to drop food parcels.

No one was hurt when a Boeing 737 relief cargo plane hit cows after it landed at the airport, but the closure of the runway highlighted the vulnerability of the relief effort as waves of aid began pouring into Sumatra.

U.S. military aid effort delivers too many patients for hospitals to handle

BY LELY T. DJUHARI

The Associated Press

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia — A growing U.S. military aid delivery effort created its own problem Tuesday — overflowing hospitals in Indonesia — while elsewhere, plans to bring relief to tens of thousands of survivors of the tsunami disaster were hampered by transport problems.

The frailty of the aid chain was exposed when flights carrying vital supplies into Banda Aceh, the provincial capital of Indonesia's devastated Aceh province, were suspended for most of the day after a cargo plane hit a herd of cattle and skidded to a halt, blocking the runway.

In Sri Lanka too, the country's only international airport was brimming with relief, but there was not enough transport available to get it to victims.

However, the British military began arriving to distribute aid, an officer said.

"There are two naval ships in the area. One is a warship with quite a significant crew who could move ashore and assist. It's also got helicopter support and engineering support," said British Royal Marines Commando Col. Gordon Messenger.

The other ship, arriving Wednesday, can provide fresh water and fuel, he said.

The helicopters are expected to fly to areas hit by the tsunamis and assess the need for help.

Elsewhere in Sri Lanka, a 14-member team of Chinese medicals opened a makeshift hospital on the back of a Buddhist temple.

In northern Sumatra, the American military relief effort continued at full pace, for the first time using SH-60 helicopters to deliver aid and evacuate refugees in addition to the smaller Seahawk choppers that have been buzzing up and down the coast in recent days.

Hospitals and helicopters were the main needs, said U.S. Marine Col. Dave Kelley, chief of the U.S. Support Group-Indonesia, based at Banda Aceh airport.

Powell surveys tsunami damage

Leaders in region ahead of summit

BY MIKE CORDER
The Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia — Leaders from around the world began jettisoning the tsunami-ravaged Indian Ocean region Tuesday to see the destruction and relief efforts for themselves ahead of a crucial conference on how to prevent a repeat of last week's carnage.

U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell was among the first, visiting the Thai resort island of Phuket, one the hardest-hit places in southern Thailand, where more than 5,000 — half of them tourists — are confirmed dead. Around the region, the death toll approached 150,000 with thousands missing.

"The president wanted both of us to come out here to demonstrate U.S. commitment to the nations of the region and to make an assessment of the situation and see what we might need to do," Powell said.

The American military is spearheading the huge aid effort in the

north of Indonesia's Sumatra island, where more than 90,000 perished.

Also visiting Phuket was Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer, whose country is setting up a military hospital on Sumatra and using a fleet of cargo planes to ferry supplies to survivors.

"I'm having discussions during the course of tomorrow with a number of Indonesian ministers about what the situation in Indonesia is, what additional assistance is required, particularly in the terms of medium and long-term reconstruction and rehabilitation of those communities that have been devastated," Downer said after visiting the island.

Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong flew into Sumatra on Tuesday to see the devastation ahead of the donor summit.

An ambitious plan to set up an Indian Ocean tsunami warning system is expected to dominate the summit.

Paving the way for relief efforts



HEATHER TOWER/Courtesy of the U.S. Air Force

Airmen from the 33rd Aircraft Maintenance Unit at Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, guide an HH-60 Pavehawk from the 33rd Rescue Squadron as it is loaded Tuesday into a C-17 Globemaster from McChord Air Force Base, Wash. McChord airmen transported two Kadena Pavehawks to Sri Lanka on Tuesday, and four more are scheduled for transport this week in support of tsunami relief efforts. In addition to aircraft and equipment, Kadena airmen have loaded more than 145 tons of relief supplies on aircraft bound for South Asia.

'Hugging saint' pledges \$22 million

COCHIN, India — An Indian religious leader known as "the hugging saint" — because she uses hugs as a gesture of blessing — pledged \$22 million Monday to help survivors of last month's devastating tsunami.

Money donated by Mata Amritanandamayi will be used to build homes for tsunami victims in the Indian states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh. Amritanandamayi's native village of

Parayakadavu in Kerala was among those hit by the Dec. 26 disaster, which killed more than 139,000 people in South Asia and Africa.

Amritanandamayi — known by her followers as "Ammma," which means "mother" in several Indian languages — has devotees throughout India and in the Americas, Europe, Africa and Asia.

Followers say she has given 30 million hugs in 30 years.

From The Associated Press

Message for our men and women in uniform...

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Barry Hirschorn, a geophysicist with the National Weather Service Pacific Tsunami Warning Center, in Ewa Beach, Hawaii, monitors computer tracking systems watching for tsunami activity in the Pacific Ocean on Thursday.

Tsunami frustrates scientists

Warning center felt helpless when quake hit Indian Ocean

BY JANIS L. MAGIN

The Associated Press

EWABEACH, Hawaii — For scientists at the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center, the world's most powerful earthquake happened below the wrong ocean.

They sat by helplessly when an 9.0-magnitude quake underneath the Indian Ocean last week touched off a series of tsunamis that killed an estimated 150,000 people in South Asia and Africa.

There were no instruments, such as tide gauges that measure sea levels, set up there to let them know that waves were on the way.

With the instruments, the scientists think they could have issued warnings that may have saved lives.

"It's just very, very frustrating," said geophysicist Stuart Weinstein, who was on duty when the disaster struck. "It's frustrating for us to learn about destructive waves from a wire report, as opposed to a tide gauge."

Weinstein and his colleagues could only surmise the earthquake off the Indonesian island of Sumatra would set off a tsunami near its epicenter. They had no way of telling what other shores it might hit or exactly when.

"I think people have a misconception about how much we know," said Charles McCreery, the center's director. Predictions are not possible without tide gauges or other such instruments in place, he said.

On Monday, Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono announced his nation would join in an international effort to set up an early-warning system for the Indian Ocean region.

Hawaii has been dealing with the fear of tsunamis since 1946, when hundreds of people were killed in Hilo after an Alaskan earthquake triggered a massive tidal wave. The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center was established three years later and has been at Ewa Beach since 1960, with a

modern international warning system in place since 1965.

The warning center's 185-acre compound, where most of the scientists also live, sits two blocks from the beach in a residential stretch of land west of Pearl Harbor.

Within 15 minutes of first learning about the Indonesia earthquake, geophysicist Barry Hirschorn and Weinstein put out a bulletin. They issued a second bulletin 49 minutes later, revising the quake's strength from a magnitude 8.0 to 8.5.

Two hours later, through Internet reports, they learned a tsunami hit Sri Lanka. Then officials from Sri Lanka began to call — a navy commander, someone in the president's office, the U.S. ambassador and the port master.

The scientists managed to reach Madagascar and the Mauritius Islands through the Seychelles. In Washington, the official there they would try to contact Kenya and Somalia.

"We tried to get people who had not yet gotten hit," Hirschorn said.

Relief efforts may boost U.S. image

BY TOM RAUM

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — U.S. aid to survivors of the catastrophic Indian Ocean tsunami, including the largest American military operation in South Asia since the Vietnam War, could help restore some U.S. prestige in the Muslim world that has been lost in Iraq.

But U.S. political leaders and analysts caution Americans shouldn't over-trumpet the American role, or they will risk a backlash.

After a sluggish start, President Bush pushed the U.S. response into high gear, ordering an expanding relief mission — by land, by sea and by air — and enlisting both his brother, Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, and his father, former President George H.W. Bush.

"This gives us an opportunity to remind the countries in the region that there are things that we can do that no one else can do — and, in particular, China can't do," said Jeffrey Bader, a former Asia expert on the National Security Council in the Clinton administration and now an international consultant.

"I thought the first few days were a lost opportunity, but then the administration stepped up to the plate," Bader said.

As the U.S. military delivered tens of thousands of pounds of food and supplies,

Analysis

Bush sent his hurricane-relief-experienced brother with Secretary of State Colin Powell to the region and put his father and former President Clinton in charge of a drive for U.S. private contributions.

"The devastation in the region defies comprehension," the president said Monday, eight days after one of history's greatest disasters claimed an estimated 150,000 lives in 12 countries and left millions homeless.

Ship-based helicopters as well as Air Force cargo planes and Navy surveillance aircraft joined the humanitarian relief effort, and thousands of Marines were on the way. The Pentagon also dispatched a 1,000-bed hospital ship from San Diego.

The mission is one the United States is uniquely equipped to carry out, with a military budget that dwarfs all other nations.

Images of U.S. troops delivering supplies and medical help to survivors in wrecked villages was a welcome contrast with months of pictures of fierce fighting, prisoner abuses by U.S. soldiers, suicide bombings and land mine attacks in Iraq.

But while the United States may generate some goodwill among Muslims and blunt al-Qaida recruiting efforts, it will be

squandered "if the purpose of this is seen as political rather than humanitarian," Bader said.

Indonesia, which suffered the largest loss of life in the tragedy, has the largest Muslim population in the world. The Bush administration hopes to bring it and other afflicted nations more directly into its war on terrorism.

Powell called it "an investment in national security."

Still, he told reporters, "We are not doing this because we are seeking political advantage or just because we are trying to make ourselves look better with the Muslims. We are doing this because these are human beings in desperate need, and the United States has always been a generous, compassionate country."

Michael O'Hanlon, a military and foreign policy analyst at the Brookings Institution, said the relief and reconstruction effort should bring "some slight benefit" in terms of improving the U.S. image. "It always is nice to be able to help people."

"On the other hand, if we push that argument ourselves, that we should be forgiven for past sins or perceived sins because now we are helping people, I think we may be being very crass and exploiting a humanitarian tragedy for our own benefit," O'Hanlon said.

The U.S. response "was necessary, and not really debatable," he added.

Nelson to headline benefit

AUSTIN — Country singer Willie Nelson is headlining a benefit concert to help the relief effort for victims of the earthquake and tsunami that battered dozens of countries.

Patty Griffin, Spoon, Joe Ely, Alejandro Escovedo, Bruce Robison and Keith Whalum of the Squirrel Bunch are among other musicians scheduled for the "Tsunami Relief Austin to South Asia" concert at the Austin Music Hall on Sunday night.

Musician Michael Hall said he was moved to do something beyond writing a check to a relief charity. He envisioned a benefit concert featuring popular Austin acts willing to lend a hand.

"I started at the top," Hall said of his first call to build a lineup, "and when Willie said, 'Come in me, I knew we were off and running.'"

Actress donates \$1 million

NEW YORK — Actress Sandra Bullock has donated \$1 million to the American Red Cross to help relief efforts in countries affected by the deadly earthquake and tsunami.

Bullock, whose screen credits include "Miss Congeniality," "While You Were Sleeping" and "Speed," contacted the American Red Cross last week, the organization said Monday. She also donated \$1 million after the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks.

Charity song resurrected

HONG KONG — The classic charity theme song "We Are the World" is being revived for tsunami relief efforts in a new Chinese version featuring Andy Lau, Jacky Cheung and other top Hong Kong stars.

The latest rendition, simply called "Love," is the featured song in Friday's Crossing Borders charity performance organized by the Hong Kong Performing Artists Guild.

Michael Jackson and Lionel Richie wrote the 1985 original to raise money for Ethiopian famine victims.

"Love" retains the English chorus of "We Are the World," but otherwise contains entirely new Chinese lyrics written by Johnny Chen and Cheng Kwok-kong.

From The Associated Press

Somalia, Myanmar also hit hard by disaster

BY RODRIQUE NGOWI

The Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya — At least 50,000 people in Somalia urgently need food, water, shelter and medical care a week after deadly tsunamis slammed African shores, a government spokesman said.

Some 24 countries, including the United States, Italy, Germany and Saudi Arabia, have pledged to send relief supplies to Somalia, but nothing has arrived on the ground, said Somali presidential spokesman Yusuf Mohamed Egal. He said survivors urgently need help after losing their homes and livelihoods.

"We are very happy that relief supplies

have arrived in Asia, which was hit the hardest by the tragedy, but Somalia — which has been ravaged from a 13-year civil war, drought and political neglect — also needs emergency help to deal with the latest calamity," Yusuf said.

At least 200 people were killed and many others are missing after violent waves hammered the Somali coast on Dec. 26, Yusuf said.

In Myanmar, scientists and Myanmar exile groups are questioning the secretive government's official death toll of 59 from the tsunami, saying many more people may have been killed.

Aid agencies have said at least 90 were

killed in southern coastal areas and islands just across the border from Thailand, where more than 5,000 died. Others say the toll could be in the hundreds.

Sean Healy, spokesman for Doctors Without Borders in Australia, said the status of outlying islands remained a question amid early indications that the mainland coast was not badly hit.

"There is destruction there, but it's not the total devastation that we're seeing in other parts of the region," he said.

Healy said official government figures were probably inflated because they appear to be exaggerated, based on what his group has seen in the areas of Myanmar it has been able to visit so far.

U.S. embassy bomb plot trial for 6 starts in Paris

BY PIERRE-ANTOINE SOUCHARD

The Associated Press

PARIS — The trial of six men accused of plotting to bomb the U.S. Embassy in Paris opened with testimony from the suspected ringleader.

Voluble French-Algerian Djamel Beghal, 39, told the Paris court on Monday that he had been kept in solitary confinement awaiting trial since his arrest in 2001. Terrorism suspects are sometimes detained alone for security reasons.

"I've not spoken for three years, so now I'm going to catch up," he said.

He explained how he moved to France in his 20s, married, did odd jobs and found his Islamic faith, which became "one of my reasons for living."

Asked if he considers himself a

radical, he replied: "I am a Muslim and Muslim to the hilt."

Moving to Britain in the 1990s enabled him to practice Islam "in a complete manner," Beghal added. But, following problems with British authorities, in 2000 he and his family moved to Afghanistan — then under Taliban control. He called it "an Islamic country where I found the most answers to my questions."

Beghal, carrying an illegally obtained French passport, was arrested in July 2001 in the United Arab Emirates after leaving Afghanistan, where he allegedly lived in terror training camps. He was extradited to France in late September 2001.

During two months of detention in Dubai, he told local authorities of a plot to target U.S. interests in France, notably the American Embassy, and said the scheme was ordered by Osama

bin Laden's terror network, officials have said.

The investigation into the alleged plot was opened on Sept. 10, 2001 — a day before the U.S. terror attacks.

The suspects are charged with criminal conspiracy with a terrorist enterprise, and risk up to 10 years in prison if convicted. The trial is to last until Feb. 16.

All six suspects attended the opening day Monday, but only Beghal testified.

Beghal has previously allegedly identified a Tunisian accomplice — former professional soccer player Nizar Trabelsi — who was to enter the U.S. Embassy wearing a bomb belt.

However, Beghal later recanted that testimony during questioning in France and suggested he had been tortured in Dubai and forced to make up the story, officials have said.



AP

Suspect Johann Bronto, left, brother-in-law of French-Algerian terrorism suspect Djamel Beghal, hides his face as he leaves the courtroom during a break in the trial of the U.S. embassy bombing plot in Paris.

One of his lawyers, Claire Doublier, said he would describe the circumstances of his Dubai interrogation, including the alleged mistreatment, during the trial.

Trabelsi is serving a 10-year sentence in Belgium for plotting bomb attacks on U.S. military personnel and involvement in an al-Qaida-linked ring in Europe.

Beghal provided information to investigators that led to the arrest

of several other suspects, including Kamel Daoudi, 30, a quiet computer expert arrested in Britain in 2002 with fake identity documents after fleeing his home in a southern Paris suburb.

According to the prosecution, Daoudi was to send information about the preparation for the attack to Afghanistan via the Internet — and receive the green light for the attack in the same way.

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E-1 AND ABOVE APPROVED

Diplomats: Egyptian scientists produced nuclear material

BY GEORGE JAHN

The Associated Press

VIENNA, Austria — The U.N. atomic watchdog agency has found evidence of secret nuclear experiments in Egypt that could be used in weapons programs, diplomats said Tuesday.

The diplomats told The Associated Press that most of the work was carried out in the 1980s and 1990s but said the watchdog — the International Atomic Energy Agency — also is looking at evidence that suggests some were as recent as a year ago.

Specifically, said one of the dip-

lomats, the Egyptians "tried to produce various components of uranium" without declaring it to the IAEA, as they were bound to under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

Among the products were several pounds of uranium metal and of uranium tetrafluoride — a pre-

cursor to uranium hexafluoride gas, said the diplomat, who demanded anonymity.

Uranium metal can be processed into plutonium, while uranium hexafluoride can be enriched into weapons grade uranium — both for use in the core of nuclear warheads.

Kenya completes first major market cleanup

NAIROBI, Kenya — Workers at Kenya's main market killed some 6,000 rats, trucked away 750 tons of garbage and sucked 70 tons of human waste out of latrines in three days of the first major cleanup of the market in 30 years, an official said Tuesday.

The Wakulima Market, which supplies fresh food to most of Nairobi's 3 million residents, was a public health hazard, with rubbish lying up 7 feet deep in some places, said Local Government Minister Musikan Kombo.

Britain's Freedom of Information Act takes effect

LONDON — Britons get their first opportunity to test the country's new Freedom of Information Act on Tuesday, when the nation goes to work after an extended New Year holiday.

But the government was already making clear that there were limits to its new openness, insisting in particular that it would not release the attorney general's advice on the legality of the Iraq war.

"Whether or not information is disclosed depends on the act, but every government needs space to take advice," Lord Falconer, the lord chancellor — or chief legal officer — said Monday.

Fireworks explode inside Austrian man's car

LINZ, Austria — An Austrian man trying to set off fireworks from his parked car was seriously injured when a rocket blew up inside the vehicle, authorities said Tuesday.

The 28-year-old victim suffered injuries to his head and a hand in the explosion. Police said the man was trying to shoot the fireworks from his car windshield into a field, and that the pyrotechnics blew up as he was lighting them inside the car.

Security measures at U.S. Embassy in Berlin

BERLIN — Concrete barriers erected outside the U.S. Embassy in Berlin after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks have been moved back, but police said Tuesday there has been no change to the "security concept" for the downtown building.

The barriers were moved back from the chic Unter den Linden boulevard closer to the embassy in late December in response to a new U.S. Embassy "security analysis," said police spokesman Andreas Polley.

From The Associated Press

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OPINION

Seeing suffering: A challenge for the faithful

By TOM SCHAEFER

The Wichita (Kan.) Eagle

The death toll from Asia's devastating tsunami has surpassed 140,000. One hundred forty thousand men, women and children. One survivor, describing the scene, said, "Hell was unleashed."

How are we to make sense of the senseless? The answer is, we can't.

The problem of evil in this world has never been fully understood and cannot be completely explained.

Watching the unbelievable devastation of Sri Lanka, Indonesia, India and other parts of Asia only heightens the anxiety about the role of the divine in the midst of destruction. How can God allow the innocent to suffer and die so horrendously? When the Rev. Billy Graham spoke at the National Cathedral (in Washington) following the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, he recounted how he is often asked why God permits evil in the world. He paused and said that he has never been able to find any fully satisfactory answers.

Not even America's pastor, as he's been called, could explain the tragedies that afflict this planet.

The question of God's power — or seeming lack thereof — has plagued humanity since biblical times.

In the Hebrew Scriptures, suffering is described as a punishment for sin, a cleansing or testing of a person. The Book of Job tells the story of a righteous man who is afflicted with the ideal and emblematic suffering and demands to know why he must endure such injustice.

The only answer he gets in the end is a voice from the heavens that asserts: Who made the heavens and the earth? Certainly not you. Who are you to question me? In the play "I.B." by Archibald MacLeish, the main character addresses this paradox of the ages: "If God is God, He is not good; if God is good, He is not God."

The logic seems irrefutable. As one theologian put it, evil and suffering are "evidence for the atheist."

Christian theology has tackled this question — often referred to as theodicy or the justice of God in the face of evil — in various ways. Some have tried to assert that everything that happens is determined by God. Humans act in a way that is commensurate with God's will. Others assert that humans have free will that somehow is wrapped up in a larger scheme that God ordains.

But do any of these attempts completely satisfy? Perhaps our idea of God, who is usually described as all-loving, all-knowing and all-powerful, needs to be reshaped.

Rabbi Harold Kushner, in his best-seller "When Bad Things Happen to Good People," contends that God should be understood as all-knowing and all-loving, but not as all-powerful. For Kushner, it's the only way to make sense of the senseless in life.

All of these points of view, however, inevitably break down. They subdivide and become more complex than a DNA double helix.

The fact is, no religion has a simple answer to the question of evil and suffering. Judaism dismisses the idea of theodicy and focuses on the righteous who suffer. Islam contends that believers must submit to whatever



Sri Lankans of different religious and ethnic backgrounds pray together in the country's capital, Colombo, on Friday, in remembrance of victims of the Dec. 26 tsunami.

er the will of God is. Christianity asserts that suffering is redemptive through Jesus.

But no matter how we try to understand suffering — our own or others — we will never be completely at ease when we face tragedy ourselves or when we see it on a monumental scale. To look at the death of more than 140,000 people — or at a loved one who dies tragically — always forces us to confront evil head-on.

Here's what we're left with: Without faith, the question of suffering and death is unanswered. With faith, we reassert every day

our belief in the One who sees the universe from a perspective far greater than our own.

We trust in the ultimate goodness of our God even when unbelief seems so much easier to embrace. We cling to faith even as we comfort those enveloped by the evil of this world.

Charles Spurgeon, a 19th-century preacher, gives us as much an anchor of hope to hold on to as anyone can: When we cannot trace God's hand, he said, we must simply trust his heart.

Tom Schaefer writes about religion and ethics for The Eagle.

How America rationalizes health-care rationing

St. Louis Post-Dispatch

In Wales this fall, a woman had to wait 17 weeks for a cancer screening after finding a lump in her breast. The British press was outraged.

But the British routinely wait up to nine months for non-emergency surgery. They accept waiting lines rather than pay higher taxes for their National Health Service.

Canadians can wait 14 months for cataract surgery or two years for a knee replacement. Yet they tell pollsters that they love their government-funded health-care system, partly because they never see a big bill, with the mention of reform in America's health-care financing runs smack into the issue of waiting lines. Americans will never put up with waiting for care, say those who see our mishmash of a health financing system. Nor will they accept rationing.

But an intelligent scheme to reform America's health-care system could provide coverage for everyone with rarely a waiting line and still save money. The French and Germans accomplish that today.

As for rationing? We already have it. In America, there is rarely a long wait for elective surgery — if you can afford it. But 1 out of 6 Americans lacks insurance. If you're one of them, you can limp around on your sore knee forever.

"We ration care today," notes Paul Ginsburg of the Center for Health System Change. "The uninsured get much less care than the insured and suffer worse health outcomes because of it."

Most Americans get their health coverage through their employers. That means that most people are just a pink slip away from being uninsured. Those with good insurance get better care than those with bad insurance. If an insurer has denied you coverage for a medical procedure, then you have experienced rationing. If it has set a limit on your hospital stay, you know rationing.

And as medical insurance rates rise at double-digit rates, employers are busy restructuring coverage. In other words, rationing is getting underway.

The trend list is for companies to offer coverage with high deductibles coupled with the chance for a family to contribute to a tax-free medical savings account. For most middle-income families, who can't afford \$5,000 in annual medical bills, such coverage is an invitation to ration their own care.

In essence, the difference between America and other advanced nations is how we ration, not whether we ration. Other nations are upfront about their rationing; we do it more subtly. They ration by government fiat. We let the insurance companies, employers and hospital admissions offices do it.

The critical difference is that other wealthy nations give fairly good care to all their citizens, and we don't. They also pro-

vide it at a much lower price. And their systems produce health results generally equal to ours, and in some cases better.

How do they do it? They use a variety of health coverage schemes. The Canadians and British use single-payer systems run by the government. The Germans use nonprofit private health insurers, called "sickness funds," closely regulated by the government. The Germans put the major cost on employers and workers through payroll fees. The Canadians use taxes.

But all use the clout of government or large buying groups to control cost. For instance, the Canadian and Japanese governments negotiate doctors' fees with large medical associations representing doctors. As the sole owner of the checkbook, the governments obviously have the upper hand.

Closely monitored cost controls tend to wring waste out of medicine. But if pushed too far, they can produce waiting lines. To

wait or not depends on how much a nation chooses to spend on health care and how efficiently its system runs.

Britain, for instance, spends 41 percent of what America spends on each citizen's care. ... The French and Germans spend more and have little waiting. The French spend slightly more than half what Americans do, and the Germans spend 57 percent.

But the fact that Europeans spend less doesn't necessarily mean that they deliver worse care, notes Richard Saltman, an Emory University professor who studies foreign health care systems. Under Britain's universal health system, for instance, everyone has a primary care doctor. That lets the British provide preventive care and spot health problems earlier, he says.

Many look at these numbers and see the obvious: With an efficient medical finance system, America could cover everyone with no waiting lines and still lower the cost of health care.

Mallard Fillmore

BY BRUCE TINSLEY



George Bush:

"I RESOLVE TO LEAN MORE TO THE RIGHT... AND NOT TO BE SUCH A BIG SPENDER..."



...TO STOP BLOWING YOUR DOUGH...

ON EACH PROGRAM IN SIGHT...

LIKE TED KENNEDY ON A BENDER?

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IN THE STATES

Military officers criticize Gonzales nomination

BY DAN EGGEN

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — A dozen high-ranking retired military officers took the unusual step this week of signing a letter to the Senate Judiciary Committee expressing "deep concern" over the nomination of White House counsel Alberto R. Gonzales as attorney general, marking a rare military foray into the debate over a civilian post.

The group includes retired Army Gen. John M. Shalikashvili, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The officers are one of several groups to separately urge the Senate to sharply question Gonzales during a confirmation hearing Thursday about his role in shaping legal policies on torture and interrogation methods.

Although the GOP-controlled Senate is expected to confirm Gonzales to succeed Attorney General John Ashcroft, some Democrats have vowed to question him aggressively amid continuing revelations of abuses of military detainees in Iraq, Afghanistan and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

The letter signed by the retired officers, compiled by the group Human Rights First and sent to the committee's leadership Monday night, criticizes Gonzales for his role in reviewing and approving a series of memorandums arguing, among other things, that the United States could lawfully ignore portions of the Geneva Conventions and that some forms of torture "may be justified" in the war on terror.

"Today, it is clear that these operations have fostered greater animosity toward

the United States, undermined our intelligence gathering efforts and added to the risks facing our troops serving around the world," the officers wrote, referring to the Bush administration's detention and interrogation policies.

Although it stops short of directly opposing Gonzales' nomination, the three-page letter contains sharp criticism of his decisions related to military legal issues and argues that he is "on the wrong side of history."

"Repeatedly in our past, the United States has confronted foes that, at the time they emerged, posed threats of a scope or nature unlike any we had previously faced," the letter reads. "But we have been far more steadfast in the past in keeping faith with our national commitment to the rule of law."

In addition to Shalikashvili, other prominent signatories to the letter include retired Marine Gen. Joseph P. Hoar, former chief of the Central Command; former Air Force Chief of Staff Merrill A. McPeak; and Lt. Gen. Claudia J. Kennedy, the Army's first female three-star general. Several, including Shalikashvili, supported the failed presidential candidacy of Democrat John F. Kerry.

Richard H. Kohn, a military historian at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill who specializes in military-civilian affairs, said the letter is extremely rare, if not unprecedented.

"I don't know of any precedent for something like this," Kohn said. "A retired group of military officers banded together to virtually oppose a Cabinet nominee? And a non-military one? It is highly unusual, to say the least."

Ethics focus as Congress convenes

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The new Congress convenes with House Republicans, leery of a bruising floor fight, stepping back from plans to significantly relax ethics rules that ensnared Majority Leader Tom Delah.

GOP leaders stressed that they didn't want the ethics issue to sidetrack their greater goals for this session of Congress, such as overhauling the Social Security system.

It would have been the right thing to do, but it was becoming a distraction," said John Feehely, spokesman for House Speaker Dennis Hastert, R-Ill., referring to a relaxation in ethics rules — including one that would make it more difficult to rebuke members whose misconduct doesn't reach the level of specific rule or law violations.

The House and Senate were opening the 109th session of Congress at noon Tuesday with the swearing-in of new members, a ceremony that makes official the GOP gains of the November elections.

Republicans picked up four seats in the Senate, to reach 55, and will command 232 of the 435 House seats, an increase of three.

The House will then take up the GOP-proposed rules changes, which, despite the modifications made by Republicans at a closed-door meeting Monday, are likely to generate Democratic protests.

The proposals will make it harder to proceed with an ethics investigation by requiring a majority vote of the evenly divided ethics committee. The current system allows an investigation to begin automatically if there is no action in 45 days.



A truck is stopped Monday due to heavy snow on Interstate 5, the primary north-south route connecting California, near Gorman. Heavy snow shut down the major highway north of Los Angeles and slowed post-holiday travel in the Sierra Nevada as Californians grappled with a second week of stormy weather.

Calif. suffers from storm aftereffects

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Ice and snow kept California's heavily traveled main north-south highway closed for a second day Tuesday as residents awaited the next storm in the parade of wild weather that has hammered the state and plowed eastward into the Rockies and Plains.

The storms that started just over a week ago have piled snow 9 feet deep on higher spots in California's Sierra Nevada, soaked Los Angeles with record rainfall, caused mudslides and knocked out power to thousands of customers. A 40-mile stretch of Interstate 5 remained shut Tuesday north of Los Angeles because as much as 2 feet of snow had fallen on top of a layer of ice at Tejon Pass, elevation about 4,200 feet, the California Highway Patrol said. The CHP closed the freeway early Monday and there was no immediate indication Tuesday when it might be reopened.

The closing added hundreds of truckers and other travelers who didn't want to turn around to take a detour looping around the mountains and through the desert.

Up to 3 feet of snow had fallen since early Monday in the mountains north of Los Angeles.

The storms were sparked by an extensive low pressure system that edged down from the Gulf of Alaska and remained parked off the Pacific Northwest coast. The latest front was expected to linger through Tuesday and another system was to move across the state later this week.

Authorities reported one weather-related death Monday — a man killed when his car went off a road and slammed into a tree. Last week, five deaths were blamed on the weather in California, along with two others in Arizona and two in Colorado.

As rain spread eastward from California, two people were missing Tuesday in central Arizona after they tried to cross a swollen stream near the small community of Punks Center, 40 miles northeast of Phoenix. A woman who crossed the stream with them was rescued, said Fritz Day, dispatch supervisor for the Gila County Sheriff's Office.

About 20 people were evacuated early Tuesday because of flash flooding in the area of Punks Center, Day said.

Details of \$100M clergy deal unsealed

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Details of a record \$100 million settlement between alleged victims of priest sexual abuse and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Orange were unsealed, with church leaders saying it would make the diocese a "holier, humbler and healthier church."

Alleged victims sobbed and hugged Monday as they spoke publicly about the deal that was nearly two years in the making. Some thanked Bishop Tod D. Brown, who as head of the diocese negotiated what has become the largest clergy abuse settlement in history.

The settlement was reached Dec. 2, but was under a court seal for a month as the parties signed off on it. It surpasses the \$85 million the Archdiocese of Boston agreed to pay 552 plaintiffs in 2002.

The settlement resolves 90 lawsuits against the diocese that included allegations against 31 priests, 10 lay personnel, one religious brother and two nuns.

"Today, we can stand and we can say, I forgive you. And of course I do, of course we forgive you," said Mark Curran, one of those whose lawsuits against the diocese led to the settlement.

Payouts were based on the length and severity of abuse and other factors, but how much each plaintiff is getting remains confidential.

Half of the payout will come from the diocese and the other half will be paid by its eight insurance carriers. The agreement also calls for the release of nearly all confidential documents from diocesan personnel files of the accused after a judge's review; attorneys estimated the first records could be released within two months.

Some 800 clergy abuse lawsuits are still pending statewide.

Laser charges

NEWARK, N.J. — A man who initially claimed his daughter aimed a laser at a helicopter was charged Tuesday with federal agents that he pointed the light beam at two aircraft, authorities said Tuesday.

David Banach of Parsippany faces charges of interfering with the operator of a mass transportation vehicle and making false statements to the FBI. He was charged after he told federal agents that he pointed the light beam at two aircraft, authorities said Tuesday.

The aircraft were targeted by the lasers near Teterboro Airport.

From The Associated Press

Senate star deflects attention



Senator-elect Barack Obama, D-Ill., meets with other newly elected members of Congress on Monday before the start of a ceremony at the White House in Washington.

Obama may not yet looking for his place in history

BY LIZ SIDOTI
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — On the eve of taking office, the most watched new arrival in the nation's capital says it's way too early to talk about his place in history.

"I haven't done anything yet," Barack Obama, Illinois' new senator and a rare bright spot in a Democratic Party that took it on the chin in the November elections, told reporters Monday.

Obama, the first black man in the Senate in 25 years and only the fifth in history, became an overnight celebrity with his keynote address to the Democrats' convention last July in Boston.

Almost overnight, the Hawaii-born son of a black father from Kenya and a white mother from Kansas became a darling of the party.

"When you start talking about history, that's measured, you know, over decades and over a lifetime of accomplishment," he said Monday. "It's not measured by making a speech, or getting elected to something."

A state senator from Chicago, Obama bested a crowded Democratic primary field of seven can-

didates to win the party's nomination for the U.S. Senate seat held by retiring Republican Sen. Peter Fitzgerald. He easily defeated Republican Alan Keyes in the general election after the original GOP nominee, investment banker Jack Ryan, dropped out when embarrassing sex allegations surfaced in divorce papers.

Democrats have high hopes for the 43-year-old Obama. Even before he reached Washington, talk swirled of an Obama run for president in 2008.

It's a notion Obama dismisses: "I'm not running for national office. I am here to be sworn in as the United States senator from the state of Illinois. I will not be running for president in '08."

That doesn't mean he won't be involved in the debate over what direction the Democratic Party should take after Sen. John Kerry's loss to President Bush and Republican gains in the House and Senate in November.

He said the party has lost sight of its values and continues to let Republicans' stereotype Democrats and define their dogma. "I don't think that we need a messiah. I think we need to get together," he said.

Nichols' defense costs released

OKLAHOMA CITY — Oklahoma taxpayers spent almost \$4.2 million to provide a defense for Oklahoma City bombing conspirator Terry Nichols, paying for such things as books, seminars, lawn care, coffee sweetener and an alarm system.

Details of the expenditures had been previously sealed by court order, but were opened Monday at the request of The Oklahoman, The Tulsa World and The Associated Press. Court-appointed defense attorney Brian Hermanson did not return telephone calls seeking comment.

Crüe curses, no one complains

LOS ANGELES — NBC hasn't received any calls about the F-word that Mötley Crüe's Vince Neil dropped during the live New Year's Eve

broadcast of "The Tonight Show With Jay Leno."

"Happy [expletive] New Year, Tommy!" Neil said to bandleader Tommy Lee shortly after midnight, USA Today reported Monday. The remark was carried to viewers on the East Coast but was edited out when it was broadcast in the West.

Man convicted in boot camp death

PHOENIX — The director of a boot camp for troubled youths was convicted of manslaughter Monday in the death of a 14-year-old camper who collapsed in the triple-digit desert heat.

Charles Long, 59, a former Marine, was charged with second-degree murder in the July 2001 death of Anthony Haynes, but the jury found him guilty of the lesser charge of reckless manslaughter.

The camp was shut down after the teen's death.

From The Associated Press

NH scientist calls U.S. study of AIDS in Uganda 'invalid'

BY JENNIFER C. KERR
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Federal officials involved in a U.S.-funded research project in Uganda were more interested in promoting an AIDS drug than patient safety, says a government whistleblower. The research was aimed at finding ways to protect babies in Africa from HIV infection.

In prepared remarks for a hearing Tuesday, Dr. Jonathan Fishbein charged that the study in Uganda was "so poorly conducted that its data must be rendered invalid as a matter of law, policy and human health."

The hearing before the National Academy of Sciences panel marked Fishbein's first public testimony since a series of articles by The Associated Press detailing problems with the project.

Fishbein, who is fighting a decision by the National Institutes of Health to fire him, is one of several employees at the government's premier health research agency to question the Uganda study. It involved giving the AIDS drug, zidovudine, to pregnant women to prevent HIV transmission to their babies.

NIH has acknowledged that the Uganda research failed to meet required U.S. standards. But it maintains hundreds of thousands of African babies have been saved by using single doses of the drug to block the AIDS virus.

Nevirapine is an antiretroviral

drug used since the 1990s to treat adult AIDS patients and is known to have potentially lethal side effects, such as liver damage, when taken in multiple doses over time.

New concerns have surfaced more recently that nevirapine also may cause long-term resistance in patients to further AIDS treatments. It is marketed in the United States as Viramune.

Fishbein, an expert hired by the National Institutes of Health to improve agency research practices, said top officials at NIH became "so heavily invested in the [Uganda] trial's outcome" that they could not be objective.

"The old adage 'garbage in, garbage out' is apt," said Fishbein in remarks prepared for the hearing.

Fishbein cited shoddy data collection, record-keeping and quality control issues. "We can ill afford to entrust the lives of people to invalid data," he said in his testimony.

Fishbein told NIH's AIDS research chief in 2003 that the Uganda study should be stopped. The agency had not resumed the research for 15 months after auditors, medical experts and others disclosed problems with the project.

The concerns were dismissed, and the clinic reopened.

Fishbein alleges he's being fired as retaliation, but the agency says he's being terminated for poor performance during his probation period.

Woman spends last days warning about smoking

BY ERIK SCHELZIG
The Associated Press

RAINELLE, W.Va. — The 42-year-old woman made her point quickly, because she had so little time left.

"I have lung cancer," Janet Wells said. "They told me that I would die within a matter of a few months."

The doctors were right, although they underestimated how much time she had left. The wife and mother got nine months instead of six to tell her story in television ads warning of the dangers of smoking.

After learning that her cancer had spread to her spinal cord and brain, Wells taped several interviews in February for the state Division of Tobacco Prevention, funded by money paid by the tobacco industry through an agreement that settled lawsuits in 46 states.

"I hope some people, especially other mothers of young children, can come to understand just how deadly their smoking is," Wells said in one of the two ads. "I didn't know lung cancer spread to



Dwight Wells of Rainelle, W.Va., sits next to the gravestone of his wife, Janet, at his home in December. Janet Wells died of cancer on Nov. 24. Before her death, Janet Wells led a short campaign of anti-tobacco ads.

your brain. I didn't know cigarette smoking would cause brain cancer. It does."

The first advertisement aired just before Wells died on Nov. 24. Wells said "it put her mind at

ease" to find out that calls to the state's quit lines had surged by 40 percent after the ad aired in 21

eastern counties, said Jean Tenney, regional coordinator with an anti-smoking group.

Like many West Virginians, Wells began smoking in her early teens; the state Department of Health and Human Resources says 28.5 percent of high school teens smoke. The state consistently ranks near the nation's top for adult smoking, with a rate of 28.4 percent in 2002.

The department estimates smokers cost West Virginia \$1.8 billion a year in health care and occupational costs and that more than one in five residents die each year because of smoking-related illnesses.

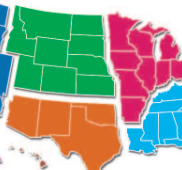
In the interviews, Wells discussed her lost future.

"I've got projects that I never got around to, and need to get done. I can't do them now," she said. "I have a very long to-do list that that lung cancer has really fouled up in a big way."

The state is preparing to rebroadcast the ads to more state television markets this month to encourage New Year's resolutions, and plans to share the recordings with other states.

Salamander a winner

IL CHICAGO — The Eastern tiger salamander slipped by two other finalists in balloting for the title of state amphibian, while slow and steady was a winning strategy for the painted turtle in the state reptile race. The public chose the winners in an interesting poll. The Legislature still has to approve them as official state symbols.



AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Suspects sought

RI PAWTUCKET — Pawtucket police were looking for three suspects connected to a home invasion that left an elderly couple bound and beaten.

Police said three people wearing dark clothing and masks broke into a Pawtucket couple's home, bound the 74-year-old and 69-year-old with duct tape and beat them about their faces.

When officers arrived at the home, the assailants had already fled.

Police said two of the robbers had handguns. One of the suspects also may have sustained a severe bite to a finger on the right hand during a struggle with one of the victims.

Various rooms in the couple's home were ransacked, and cash and other valuables were taken, police said.

Secondary water supply

UT LAYTON — Three rapidly growing Davis County communities are hinging approval for new development proposals on whether builders have secondary water sources secured. While the requirement will increase the cost of new home construction, city leaders say it will prevent them from running out of drinking water before running out of room to build.

Whale untangled

SC COLUMBIA — Scientists apparently have freed a young Atlantic right whale from more than 150 feet of lobster fishing gear after riding along the animal on a U.S. Coast Guard cutter for nearly 24 hours, officials say.

Workers untangled the whale off the South Carolina coast, said Barb Zoodsma, a right whale recovery coordinator for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration who was part of the rescue team.

"It did have some severe head wounds that were beginning to dig into the animal's flesh," Zoodsma said in a telephone interview.

"We know those all came free."

Some line may have remained around a flipper that the rescue crew was unable to check, Zoodsma said.

The gear around the head caused severe injuries to the whale's blowhole, leaving it able to open to about the size of a quarter instead of the normal 6 to 7 inches, Zoodsma said.

Still no new jobs

TX AUSTIN — Ten months after it received \$1.6 million from Republican Gov. Rick Perry's Texas Enterprise Fund, the Texas Energy Center has yet to create any new jobs and is without a director.

Created in 2003, the center was

proposed as a way to transform the energy industry by bringing together business and researchers to develop new energy sources. It was to create thousands of jobs and bring millions of dollars in corporate investment to the Houston suburb of Sugar Land.

Energy Center leaders say the problem is a lack of federal funds and a need to change their business plan to fit the objectives of the jobs-focused Texas Enterprise Fund. A better fit, they said, would have been the emerging technology fund that Perry recently proposed. That fund would emphasize research and development and demand fewer immediate jobs.

New trial rejected

CA LOS ANGELES — A graduate student convicted in the \$2 million firebombing of scores of sport utility vehicles lost a bid for a new trial.

A federal judge rejected the motion by 24-year-old William Jensen Cottrell, the U.S. attorney's office said.

Cottrell had claimed the court improperly barred his attorneys from presenting evidence that he suffered from a type of autism that made it difficult for him to understand the intentions of his alleged accomplices.

U.S. District Judge R. Gary Klausner sided with prosecutors, who argued that Cottrell's complaint was "irrelevant to the issues at trial."

Cottrell, a doctoral candidate at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, was found guilty in



Tackling dad
Rick Ross, bottom, plays a game of football with his son, Jermamee, 6, as they enjoy the warm weather at Freedom Park in Charlotte, N.C.

November of conspiracy to commit arson and seven counts of arson in the August 2003 rampage.

More than 100 vehicles were damaged or destroyed at dealerships and homes in the San Gabriel Valley near Los Angeles.

Two fellow students have been identified by prosecutors as "fugitive co-conspirators." Cottrell faces at least five years in prison at sentencing.

Hazardous waste fire

AR EL DORADO — A fire at a hazardous waste incineration plant forced the evacuation of a quarter of the city's 23,000 residents, officials said.

No injuries were reported and officials were monitoring air quality as thick smoke rose from the plant, said Sheriff Ken Jones.

Officials with the Teris plant in southern Arkansas were unavailable for comment.

The county jail, about 400 yards from the plant, was among the buildings evacuated and about 150 inmates were moved to a school gymnasium eight miles outside of town, Jones said.

Liable for \$300M

NV LAS VEGAS — A federal judge has ruled that Nevada's two main electric utilities missed their chance to escape an Enron Corp. power supply contract in 2001, and are liable for \$300 million in payments to the bankrupt energy trader.

Nevada Power Co. of Las Vegas and Sierra Pacific Power Co. of Reno kept buying power from Enron for several months after learning of Enron's "questionable financial state," U.S. District Judge Barbara Jones said in a ruling issued in New York.

Jones upheld an earlier federal bankruptcy judge's ruling, saying that by accepting power deliveries, the Nevada utilities "ratified the contract" and waived their opportunity to argue that Houston-based Enron engaged in fraud.

An official with the Nevada utilities declined comment on the Dec. 23 ruling, which the utilities' parent company, Sierra Pacific Resources, included in a filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Highway towing

TX HOUSTON — More than 90 cars were towed away on the first day of a new initiative to clear Houston's clogged freeways of disabled or abandoned cars at the owner's expense.

"This is a rip-off," said Ahmed El-Helbawi, who paid \$81.50 to have his son's 1987 Volvo station wagon towed.

Motorists no longer will be allowed to change flat tires on the freeway shoulder, leave vehicles to get fuel or call their own help.

Surveillance plans

MA HOLYOKE — The city plans to install five surveillance cameras at downtown high-crime areas, Police Chief Anthony R. Scott said. Holyoke will be the first city in the state other than Boston to install such cameras, Scott said. Boston installed many of the cameras this summer in response to potential terrorist threats during the Democratic National Convention and they remain in operation.



Slippery jaunt

A climber scales a steep ice flow on the flanks of Mount Pisgah in Westmore, Vt. Wet weather and cold temperatures have resulted in good ice climbing conditions in the area, which features numerous climbs high above Lake Willoughby.



Getting dirty

Jeremy Leboeuf, right, gives his 1-year-old daughter, Spirit, a ride on his all-terrain vehicle in Houma, La. Leboeuf and some of his friends spent the afternoon getting muddy riding around trails off of St. Louis Canal Road.



Stuffed animal abuse

Tom Copeland of St. Petersburg, Fla., turns his dog, Tickle, loose on a stuffed badger in the stands at the Outback Bowl in Tampa, Fla. The Georgia Bulldogs defeated the Wisconsin Badgers 24-21.



Polar bears plunge

Staff Sgt. Nelson Long Jr. from Myerstown, Pa., holds an American flag as he leads the charge at the 15th Annual Polar Bear Plunge at the Willow Springs Park in Richland, Pa. Long, a National Guardsman with the 1067th Transportation Company, had a weekend leave and joined nearly 600 other participants raising funds for the Developmental and Disabilities Services of Lebanon Valley, Pa.



Low-flying trick

Cody Cline flies through the air on the slopes of McQueen High School in Reno, Nev.



Party in Philly

Balloons are released as a band performs outside of City Hall in Philadelphia during the annual Mummers Parade.



Honoring those lost

Joe Spector replaces some of the more than 1,200 American flags that the wind had knocked over in the front yard of his Overland Park, Kan., home. Spector says he has placed one flag in his yard for each U.S. soldier killed in the war in Iraq. Spector decided to display the flags instead of holiday lights on his house.

Murder rate drops

AL BIRMINGHAM — Homicides in Birmingham dropped 26 percent in 2004, dipping to the second fewest in the city in 20 years, officials said. The city finished the year with 64 killings, 23 fewer than in 2003. Bessemer, Fairfield and unincorporated Jefferson County also saw their homicide numbers drop. The county counted 11 homicides in 2004, compared with 21 the previous year.

Home business fight

UT LOGAN — The fight over a woman's desire to run a colon cleansing service out of her home has gotten down and dirty.

Colette Yates says she has invested two years and roughly \$40,000 on her home business, which focuses on removing waste from the large intestine by injecting water into the colon, where it loosens and softens waste.

But while colon hydrotherapy is a licensed procedure in other states, it is considered only a homeopathic method in Utah.

The Providence Planning Commission recently recommended denial of Yates' request for a permit. Commissioners said they wanted to avoid setting a precedent of allowing medically oriented businesses in residential neighborhoods.

Same-sex challenge

RI TIVERTON — The Tiverton School Committee asked a judge whether it can extend health care coverage to the same-sex spouse of a retired high school teacher. Cheryl McCullough, who worked as a health teacher and guidance counselor at Tiverton High School for 27 years, applied for health insurance for Joyce Bolwin in June, days after the couple was married in their home state of Massachusetts, where same-sex marriages are legal. Lawyers for both sides say this is the first case of this kind in Rhode Island, where the law is silent on gay marriage.

Office swapping ends

IN ALBION — Republican Diann Bortner and Democrat Bonnie Summe were once notorious office swappers. Those days have now ended.

Bortner and Summe traded treasurer and clerk jobs in Noble County every eight years to skirt a state law on term limits. But Summe, 73, retired last year after 33½ years in government.

Summe and Bortner, who now takes over as treasurer after eight years as clerk, were elected for years with and without opponents.

Because state law limits treasurers and clerks to eight years of continuous tenure in each elected position, they informally arranged to switch offices every eight years.

From 1981 to 1988, Bortner served as Noble County clerk, Summe served as county treasurer. For the next two terms, Bortner served as treasurer while Summe served as clerk. In 1996, they swapped again.

Rifle research

KY LOUISVILLE — A rare rifle once owned by President George Washington is coming off display at the Frazier Historical

Arms Museum collection.

Museum spokesman Liz Ferguson said the rifle, first exhibited Nov. 28, will be removed Jan. 10 for more research.

The museum's founder, Louisville businessman Owsley Brown Frazier, lent the flintlock rifle, which is the only long gun owned by America's first president still known to exist, to the foundation that runs the museum.

The .44-caliber rifle likely was presented as a gift to Washington at his Mount Vernon estate in Virginia in 1791, museum officials have said. The museum's chief curator, Walter "Chip" Karcheski Jr., "will further investigate the provenance" of the rifle, Ferguson said. "There is no doubt the rifle was owned by Washington. But we hope to find a letter or a diary passage that cites specifically when the rifle was presented to Washington," Ferguson said.

Young med student

CO DENVER — Alex Oshynsky may be in his second year of medical school, but he still can't buy a drink.

He is 20.

Oshynsky, who took only a whole year to graduate college, is on his way to becoming a brain surgeon so he can study the mathematical modeling of the brain's pathways. The possibilities include finding ways for paraplegics or quadriplegics to move prosthetic devices using brain waves.

Oshynsky graduated from high school in 2002 and from the University of Colorado at Boulder in 2003. He is in his second year of medical school at Duke University. This fall, he'll pursue a doctorate in mathematical biology at Oxford University as one of 40 Americans awarded a Marshall Scholarship from the British government.

"In terms of sheer intellectual horsepower, Alex Oshynsky is probably the brightest student I have ever known," CU honors professor Ron Billingsley said.

Drug court program

WI OSHKOSH — Winneshago

County officials say they plan to institute a drug court program that would seek to address drug issues without jail or prison terms through frequent court contact, regular drug testing and treatment. Three other Winnebago counties already have drug courts. County Judge Scott Woldt cited the success of a similar program in Hastings, Minn., which he says had a 17 percent reduction in recidivism.

Breeding walleye

WV CHARLESTON — Re-

searchers have found a unique strain of walleye in the Ohio River that West Virginia wildlife officials plan to breed in an effort to boost the fish's population in the river.

Unlike the lake-dwelling walleye normally stocked in the Ohio, this strain of fish has adapted to living in a river. Although it has only been found in the upper Ohio, north of the Bellevue pool, wildlife officials believe it would thrive throughout the waterway if they breed it in a hatchery and stock it. Similar strains of river-adapted walleye have been found in the New River in Virginia and the Rock Castle River in Kentucky.

Stories and photos from news wires

FACES

Ferguson takes over talk show

Craig Ferguson has something that will make his late-night TV talk show distinct — his Scottish accent.

Now the new host of CBS' "The Late Late Show," does he plan on making changes to the format? "I am going to stay with the format as it is for now and experiment with it gradually. I think you have to know your way around an engine before you start dismantling it," he said.



Ferguson

Ferguson is best known for "The Drew Carey Show," where he played Drew Carey's boss.

He is replacing Craig Kilborn, who stepped down last August.

Murray defends defensiveness

Bill Murray gets defensive when told he has a reputation for being difficult.

"If it keeps obnoxious people away, that's fine," he tells Time magazine. "It makes me think of that line 'you catch more flies with honey than vinegar.' People say this to you with a straight face, and I always say, 'Who Wants Flies?'"

While on the set of Jim Jarmusch's new film, Murray, star of "The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou," got into a quarrel with the location manager when he arrived at a rented house for a scene with child actors and discovered there was no heat. When he started a fire in the fireplace, the location manager told him to stop.

"Who are you?" Murray said he told her. "She said, 'I'm locations.' I said, 'Well, if locations had done their job and made sure it was warm enough for these people, we wouldn't be lighting a fire in the fireplace.'"

Actress feels 'lucky' about role

After her Oscar-winning performance in 1999's "Boys Don't Cry," Hilary Swank thought the world was her oyster.

Since then, her film has included "The Affair of the Necklace," and the HBO drama "Iron Jawed Angels." None were as well received as "Boys Don't Cry."

Now she is earning critical raves for her role as boxer Maggie Fitzgerald in Clint Eastwood's "Million Dollar Baby."

"Not to put down any of the other movies I've done [since 'Boys Don't Cry'], but they weren't meaty like this," Swank told the San Francisco Chronicle in Sunday's editions. "I feel really lucky to have found two amazing roles before I hit 30."

Taking love interest to screen

Kevin Bacon had intimate knowledge about his character's love interest while shooting his new movie, "The Woodsman." She was, after all, Kyra Sedgwick, his real life wife.

"We've been married 16 years, and this is one of the handful of times we've been on-screen together," Bacon told the Boston Herald in Sunday's editions.

"She had a lot of hesitation about taking the part," said Bacon, who managed to persuade his wife to take the part.

"I said to her, 'Look, we don't have a Hollywood tabloid kind of marriage. People are not really all that interested in our marriage because it's a good one and is therefore uninteresting.'"



Bacon



KRT

Actress Janine Turner makes her directorial debut with the short film "Trip in a Summer Dress," which also stars her daughter, Juliette Gauntt, right. The film made its debut at the Angelika Film Center in Dallas. The two are shown in Grapevine, Texas.

Turner gets southern exposure

Actress' return to Texas allows her to make her movie — her way

BY CATHY FRISINGER

Knight Rider Newspapers

DALLAS — "Woo-hoo!"

Janine Turner is flying so high she lets out a gleeful whoop every few minutes as she addresses the crowd gathered for the red-carpet opening of her directorial debut.

"Stand up, Mike," she orders Mike Norris, son of actor Chuck Norris. "[Mike's] also my husband in the movie — who couldn't talk because we couldn't pay him."

"Woo-hoo!"

Across Turner, best known for her role as Alaskan bush pilot Maggie O'Connell in TV's "Northern Exposure," is as giddy as a 5-year-old on Christmas morning at this gathering earlier this month at the Angelika cinema in Dallas. And why not? It's her party. For her movie — her movie in every imaginable way.

"Trip in a Summer Dress," a 26-minute film about a mother and daughter divided by a secret, wasn't just directed by Turner. It was also Turner who sought out the rights to the short story by Annette Sanford that appeared in a "Texas Bound" collection. It was Turner who put up the \$20,000 to finance the film; Turner who wrote the screenplay; Turner who portrayed the overbearing Mama; Turner who plucked her family and friends for talent to play the roles of Sara Jean, Blue-Haired Lady 1 and Little Girl on Bus; Turner who sang the music that plays over the closing credits. It's even Turner's horses and cows and dog that appeared in "Summer Dress" (with appropriate credits, by name — AB, Maggie, Chubbies, etc. — at the end of film).

"Very seldom does anyone have their

hand on every frame of a film," says "Designing Texas" host and longtime Turner gal-pal Jocelyn White, who's co-executive producer of the film.

So it's not Hollywood. And it's not a feature-length film. And there aren't oodles of people with famous names competing for the spotlight at the opening.

Still, it's Turner's work, all the way. "This was, and is, by far my favorite project," bubbles Turner.

A svelte, heavily made-up Janine Turner is taking to some people in the lobby of Timaron Country Club in Southlake, Texas, after a photo shoot when a graying gentleman walks up to her.

"I used to play golf with your father," he says, extending a hand and an eager smile.

Turner looks pleased and replies that he had doesn't play golf much anymore. "He took up cows."

Exchanges like that are among the reasons why Turner — Emmy nominee, movie star — lives in Collesville, Texas. The Fort Worth area always has been her real home. It was in Euless that she learned to ride a bicycle, at Eagle Mountain Elementary that she exchanged comic valentines with classmates, at Boswell High that she cheered for the football team.

Although her career took her to New York and California, she's glad she chose to return to North Texas, where long-standing connections enrich her life, even though the spotlight is harder to command from Colleyville.

When she attends church here, her sister-in-law is singing in the choir.

In when she wants to ride a horse, it's a short drive north to her ranch, Mocking-

bird Hill, where Maggie (she swears the horse was named before she bought her) and her herd of longhorns reside.

And when her 6-year-old daughter, Juliette, feels sick during an interview, it's easy for Turner's mother, Colleyville real estate agent Janice Gauntt, to swing by and pick up her granddaughter with the mane of curls.

Such home-style comforts aren't taken lightly by Turner. She knows well what it's like to live the other kind of life, the kind where career and the quest for fame come first.

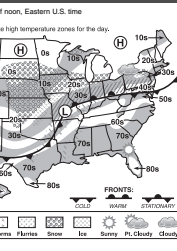
A dark-eyed beauty even as a child, she'd done occasional modeling for the Kim Dawson Agency from the age of 3. When she was 15, she moved to New York City with her mother to pursue modeling and acting.

Her first TV role was on the "Who Shot J.R.?" episode of "Dallas." Then came a series of dance-in-distress roles where she'd be rescued by David Hasselhoff as "Knight Rider" or some similar TV-style hero. She did a year on "General Hospital" — "as a blonde, because they wanted me to look like Genie Francis."

"I learned from that year that if you take a role on TV, it better be a role that you like."

Finally, in 1990, came the big break, with her Maggie role in "Northern Exposure," an ensemble comedy-drama about the quirky characters living in a tiny Alaskan town. After pursuing fame away from Texas for years, success was, strangely, the means to her return home. Her first purchases with her newfound wealth were a black pickup and a horse — sure signs of who she really was.

I lived in LA, New York, Seattle and I never really felt the desire to go home until I had my big break, and then I thought, 'I can go home, now,'" she says.



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Horoscope

Oh, the Scorpio moon is a gypsy temptress. She shows us the way the things we desire and then plays a coy game, dangling it just out of reach. The question she poses: What are you willing to do to get what you want? How far will you go? For now, it's enough to toy with the fantasy. It's best not to make a move in the heat of passion.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (January 5). Creative self-expression is your passion this year, and the best things in life come to you through creative channels. The winter months find you experimenting. Come April, you vocalize your needs in all your major relationships. A new job or romance ensues, bringing you deep fulfillment and peace. Love signs are Aquarius and Pisces.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Your driving ambition comes with a price. Heal yourself by valuing yourself. Acknowledge all that you've already accomplished. You are perfect as you are. You don't need to be anything but you.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Examine your motivations with regard to a romantic relationship. You may feel yourself being drawn in by the allure of money or material things. Be careful not to build a relationship based on a false sense of security.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You need your wiggle room. Committed twins probably want more space in a relationship than a partner does. If single, you could meet someone rather eccentric. Keep an open mind, but proceed with caution.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Let out a rebel yell. A burst of energy has you feeling jazzed. You're ready to break out of your shell and do something wild. Focus on personal freedom and your own unique mode of expression.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Put your creativity to practical purposes. Your talent is without limit, and so is the demand for your services. You

can truly benefit the world on a grand scale. Use your ingenuity, and take advantage of new technology.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Is it possible that you're overloading your schedule with extracurricular activities in order to avoid something at home? Abandon these passive-aggressive tactics in favor of a more honest approach.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You are able to put your concerns aside for the time being and examine your relationships with a bit more common sense. Are you really getting what you need out of them? Don't be afraid to try a different tactic.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Stuck in neutral? Maybe that's not such a bad thing. It is the wise Scorpion who strikes only when there is a real advantage to be gained. Scope out the situation a little while longer, and then act decisively.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You find yourself cast in the role of the old guard, defending your position against some young whippersnapper who's eager to take your place. Ah, the price of success! Why not offer to be his/her mentor?

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Lay down the law if you must, but first, try to see the situation from the other person's point of view. Is he or she really being disruptive or merely unconventional? Perhaps your own methods could benefit from a fresh approach.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Your humanitarian efforts gain a new level of emotional depth. Harness this blast of renewed enthusiasm, and run with it. Sign up new recruits. Think up new slogans. You are hereby nominated chief visionary officer.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Your creativity has been unleashed, and now, your mind is like a geyser, spewing imaginative ideas all over. Some are realistic, and some are wildly fantastical. Let them down as they come to you. Then, tackle the easiest first.

Creators Syndicate

Holiday Mathis



Calvin and Hobbes



Jump Start



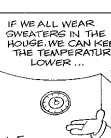
Zits



Cathy



Hi and Lois



Beetle Bailey



Red and Rover



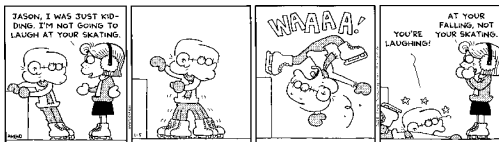
Better or Worse



Peanuts



Fotrot



B.C.



Baby Blues



Spider Man



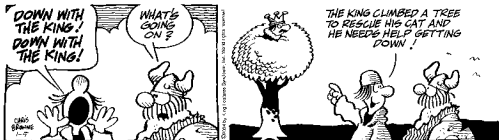
Blondie



Dilbert



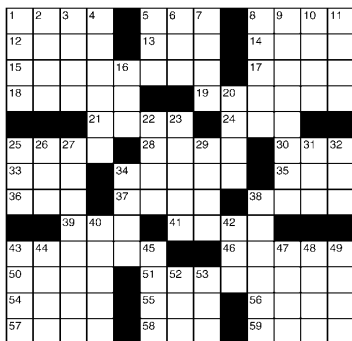
Hagar



Garfield



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



Across

1 Renee Fleming rendition

5 Calendar abbr.

8 Heart of the matter

12 "Consummation"

13 Misses up

14 Biblical preposition

15 Getting there

17 Load cargo

18 Brown ermine

19 Hale or Lane

21 Back talk

24 Fish eggs

25 Something outstanding

28 Nuclear energy source

30 Triumphant

33 Aye canceler

34 With 43-Across, all over

35 Suitable

36 Skill

37 Singer Horne

38 Urban legend

39 "Malcolm in the Middle" dad

41 Bread spread

43 "See ya"

46 Risk

50 Corn Belt state

51 See 31-Across

54 Unruly tyke

55 A billion years

56 Sea eagle

57 Terrier type

58 D.C. VIP

59 Deli loaves

Down

1 Commotions

3 Carry on

3 Grooving on

4 Shocked

5 A handful

6 Mound stat

7 — Mawr

8 Virn and vigor

9 Blocking

10 Old portico

11 Hamlet

16 JFK info

20 Host

22 Rescue

23 Secretarial ability

25 Modern-day evidence

26 Listener

27 Incidentally

29 Exam format

31 Make up your mind

32 Ultimate, in a sense

34 A Beverly Hills

38 Parent

40 Decrease

42 Computer key

43 Some have pap smears

44 Lancaster foe

45 Rams' ma'ams

47 Off

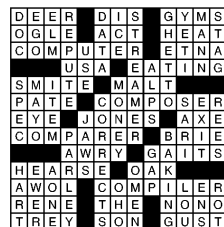
48 Welles role

49 View-finders?

52 Wedding tool

53 B&B

Answer to Previous Puzzle



I-5

CRYPTOQUIP

G'K OMQN XPFFN BGRX KN

LMB ZSDFME-DF ZRMQMS

ZNZRMK. GR BPZ P ZSDLE

G L O M Z R K M L R .

Yesterday's Cryptquip: BECAUSE I REMEMBER THE NUTRITION FACTS OF A CERTAIN CEREAL, IS THAT TOTAL RECALL?

Today's Cryptquip Clue: F equals P

Beware of fiancé's meddling mom

Dear Abby: I have been dating "Richard" for three years. I am 27 and he is 25. We have talked about settling down for quite a while now.

A month ago, Richard asked me to marry him. He has looked at engagement rings in the past, and he knows my taste. However, he decided it would only be right to let his parents know about his decision. His mother, "Irene," asked him how much he planned to spend for a ring. He told her \$2,000 to \$3,000, and she said that was too much money.

She added that he should buy me something little now, and in a few years, he could buy me something nicer.

Abby, I don't feel this should be Irene's decision to make. Richard earns good money. This would not break the bank for him, believe me. I am doubly upset because Richard has decid-

ed to take his mother's advice. Irene is always interfering, demanding to know what's happening with us.

She says that he's the "man" and needs to act like it. She told him he "shouldn't let a woman control him." Irene even has our wedding planned for us.

Am I being unreasonable? I'm afraid that if we are married, Irene will be a constant interference.

Lost in New York
Dear **Lost:** Your fears are justified. Until Richard stops allowing his mother to make his decisions for him, she will rule the roost, and her wishes and opinions will take precedence over yours. It's interesting that Irene is telling her son not to let a woman control him, when she's the one who's doing it. If I were you, I'd recognize the writing on the wall and run for the hills.

Dear Abby: I know alcohol-

ism and substance abuse are diseases, but how long is a wife supposed to stick around, forgive backsliding, and try to pick up the pieces? It is better to stay for the children's sake, or to leave for their sake? I don't want my kids to think that being drunk and stoned every day is acceptable.

My husband lives for today. I live for the future. He tells me I'm a terrible person for not abiding by the "for better or for worse." I keep asking him, "Where is the better?" After 14 years, all I have been left with is worse and worse. Please tell me what to do.

Wants to Leave in New Jersey
Dear **Wants to Leave:** Make your move. Your husband will not get better until he realizes exactly how great a price his addictions have exacted from you and the children — and ultimately himself.

Letters for this column — with your name and phone number — should be addressed to Dear Abby, P.O. Box 6940, Los Angeles CA 90069. Readers can write to Abby on the Internet at: <http://www.uepress.com/dearabby>

Universal Press Syndicate

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

GOBUM

YUNNF

RANBEN

RUMAI

www.jumble.com

Answer here: " " " "

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Universal Press Syndicate

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by Henri Arnold and Mike Argrin



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: DAILY WHEEL POLICE MISUSE
Answer: Why the mogul didn't pay the sculptor for the bust — HE WAS "CHISELED"

OK to move closer to daughter

Dear Annie: My 24-year-old daughter, "Diana," and I are very close. This summer she will be marrying "Dave," a wonderful young man. I am happy for them. Dave has accepted a job 12 hours away from here, so they are planning to move. It is a terrific opportunity for both of them. Diana will be able to continue working toward her doctorate, and Dave can advance in his career.

I am a single parent, and Diana is my only child. I have a disability, and although I can make it on my own, there will be things I will have to get help with. I don't have any other family around.

Knowing this, Dave and Diana have asked me to move with them.

I suspect that they will be a married couple, and I don't want to be the mother-in-law who is always in the way, so I said "no."

Annie's Mailbox



I love Diana enough to let her go. Unfortunately, the more this becomes a reality, the harder it is getting for me. I am seriously rethinking making the move, but I want to do what will be best for them. Any words of wisdom for me?

Brenda in California
Dear **Brenda:** We commend you for putting your daughter's happiness before your own. However, that doesn't mean you can't have your cake and eat it, too.

Look for a place within a short distance of Dave and Diana's new home. As soon as you are settled, check out local social organizations, or support groups for the disabled, so you will have friends of your own and a life independent of your daughter. If you make a genuine effort not to be a burden, Diana and Dave will cherish having you nearby.

Dear Annie: I have a ques-

tion for you. Am I expected to give a tip to a tow-truck driver who comes to help me through AAA? I pay quite a bit to have an AAA membership, and when I recently needed it because I got a flat tire, the tow-truck driver hung around waiting for a tip. I did not have any cash on me and felt uncomfortable. I said "thank you" numerous times and then just left.

If I'd had the money, should I have tipped him?

Bergen County, N.J.

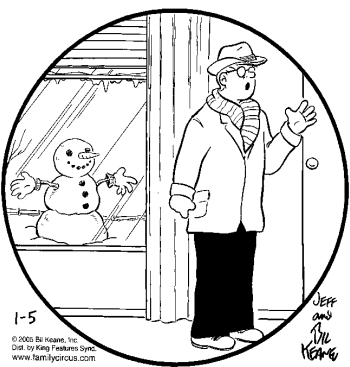
Dear **Bergen:** According to AAA, members are never expected to tip.

It is one of the benefits of membership, although if the person feels that the tow-truck driver has performed service above and beyond, tipping is certainly permitted.

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of *Ann Landers* column. Please e-mail your questions to anniesmailbox@comcast.net, or write to: Annie's Mailbox, c/o Creators Syndicate, Suite 777, W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045.

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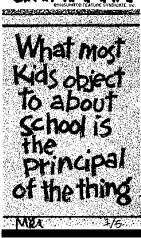
Family Circus



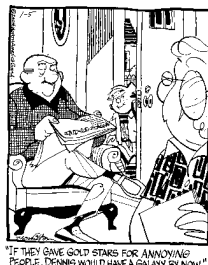
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"Anybody seen my gloves?"

GRAFFITI

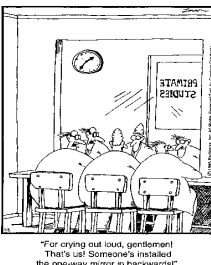


Denmis the Menace



© Gary Larson

The Far Side



Non Sequitur



NBA scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division			
	W	L	Pct
New York	16	13	.553
Philadelphia	14	10	.587
Boston	14	12	.529
New Jersey	18	13	.577
Toronto	21	11	.657

Southeast Division			
	W	L	Pct
Miami	25	8	.758
Orlando	15	15	.500
Charlotte	14	17	.447
Atlanta	21	12	.636

Central Division			
	W	L	Pct
Cleveland	18	12	.600
Detroit	17	13	.565
Indiana	16	14	.535
Chicago	18	13	.577
Memphis	19	13	.593

Western Conference

Southwest Division			
	W	L	Pct
San Antonio	25	7	.781
Portland	20	10	.667
Houston	16	15	.516
Phoenix	17	14	.550
New Orleans	2	27	.069

Northwest Division			
	W	L	Pct
Seattle	23	6	.793
Minnesota	20	12	.625
Denver	17	14	.550
Utah	21	14	.603

Pacific Division			
	W	L	Pct
Phoenix	16	4	.800
Sacramento	19	6	.760
Los Angeles	18	7	.720
LA Clippers	15	10	.600
Golden State	10	15	.400

Monday's games			
Toronto 105, Orlando 98			
Boston 108, New Orleans 90			
Cleveland 94, Charlotte 83			
Seattle 96, Miami 96			
Memphis 92, Utah 82			
LA Clippers 112, Golden State 104			

Tuesday's games			
Milwaukee at Portland			
New Jersey at Washington			
Sacramento at New York			
Chicago at Minnesota			
LA Lakers at San Antonio			

Wednesday's games			
Atlanta at Cleveland			
Golden State at Boston			
Sacramento at Toronto			
Seattle at Orlando			
Minnesota at Charlotte			
New York at Miami			
New Jersey at Milwaukee			
Chicago at New Orleans			

Thursday's games			
Phoenix at Houston			
LA Lakers at Portland			
LA Clippers at Utah			
Seattle at Washington			
San Antonio at Indiana			

Friday's games			
LA Lakers at Portland			
LA Clippers at Utah			
Seattle at Washington			
San Antonio at Indiana			

Saturday's games			
LA Lakers at Portland			
LA Clippers at Utah			
Seattle at Washington			
San Antonio at Indiana			

Sunday's games			
LA Lakers at Portland			
LA Clippers at Utah			
Seattle at Washington			
San Antonio at Indiana			

Monday's games			
LA Lakers at Portland			
LA Clippers at Utah			
Seattle at Washington			
San Antonio at Indiana			

Tuesday's games			
LA Lakers at Portland			
LA Clippers at Utah			
Seattle at Washington			
San Antonio at Indiana			

Wednesday's games			
LA Lakers at Portland			
LA Clippers at Utah			
Seattle at Washington			
San Antonio at Indiana			

Thursday's games			
LA Lakers at Portland			
LA Clippers at Utah			
Seattle at Washington			
San Antonio at Indiana			

Friday's games			
LA Lakers at Portland			
LA Clippers at Utah			
Seattle at Washington			
San Antonio at Indiana			

Saturday's games			
LA Lakers at Portland			
LA Clippers at Utah			
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Sunday's games			
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LA Clippers at Utah			
Seattle at Washington			
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Monday's games			
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LA Clippers at Utah			
Seattle at Washington			
San Antonio at Indiana			

Tuesday's games			
LA Lakers at Portland			
LA Clippers at Utah			
Seattle at Washington			
San Antonio at Indiana			

Wednesday's games			
LA Lakers at Portland			
LA Clippers at Utah			
Seattle at Washington			
San Antonio at Indiana			

Thursday's games			
LA Lakers at Portland			
LA Clippers at Utah			
Seattle at Washington			
San Antonio at Indiana			

Charlottesville Heat rally, snap losing streak

The Associated Press

Perfection lasted nearly a month for the Miami Heat. Then, the Seattle SuperSonics came to town.

Ray Allen scored 35 points and Rashard Lewis added 17 points and 13 rebounds as the SuperSonics snapped the Heat's franchise-record 14-game winning streak Monday night with a 98-96 victory.

Seattle improved the NBA's second-best record to 12-1.

Only Phoenix (12-2) had more success away from home.

"We had to beat a very good team tonight," said Seattle coach Nate McMillan, whose team won six straight road games. "I think that is the team we have been coming out of the Eastern Conference."

Dwyane Wade had 23 of his 38 points after halftime for Miami, which fell to 6-6 against teams from the Western Conference.

Shaquille O'Neal had 25 points, 14 rebounds, a season-high seven blocks and four assists for the Heat, who were outscored 46-36.

"It was disappointing for the streak to end that way," Heat coach Stan Van Gundy said. "The only real negative in the game was our rebounding. We got absolutely worked on the glass."

The loss denied Miami's bid for the NBA's first 15-game winning streak since O'Neal's Los Angeles Lakers won 19 straight in the 2000 season.

"I'll take 14 out of 15 any day of the month, any week of the month, any month of the year, any year of the century," O'Neal said. "I don't know what comes after century."

With the score 98-95, Lewis fouled Miami's Eddie Jones on a three-point try with 14 seconds remaining. But the Heat guard was a 78.7 percent shooter entering the game — connected on only one of three free-throw attempts, though — when he missed intentionally.

"When he missed the first one, I most definitely exhaled," Lewis said. "I thought it was a bad call."

Said Jones, who finished with 14 points: "It would have been better if he went in, but it didn't, so they just need to keep moving on."

Cavaliers 94, Bobcats 83: At Charlotte, N.C., LeBron James wasn't hampered by a plastic mask he wore to protect his broken left cheek, scoring 26 points with eight rebounds and six assists.

Drew Gooden added 19 points, and Charlotte native Jeff McInnis scored 13 points despite being bothered all day by flu symptoms.

Kareem Rush scored 19 points to lead the Bobcats, who lost their sixth straight. Emeke Okafor hurt his streak of double-doubles snapped at 19 games after finishing 12 points with just five re-



SuperSonics guard Ray Allen had 35 points on Monday to help snap Miami's franchise-record 14-game winning streak.

bounds.

Raptors 105, Magic 94: At Toronto, Chris Bosh tied his career high with 25 points, and Morris Peterson scored a season-high 21. Bosh also had 12 rebounds for the Raptors, who ended a three-game losing skid.

Steve Francis had 19 points for the Magic, who have lost four straight over and six in a row on the road. Orlando's frustration showed in the fourth quarter when Francis received a late technical and Cuttino Mobley was ejected after getting back-to-back technicals.

Celtics 108, Hornets 90: At Boston, Paul Pierce had 19 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists for his fourth career triple-double. And Raef LaFrentz had 14 points and 12 rebounds as Boston sent the Hornets to their eighth consecutive loss.

Marcus Banks, making a rare start at point guard in place of injured Gary Payton, had five points and an assist and Ricky Davis scored 23 for Boston, which had lost four of its previous five games.

Lee Naillon and Baron Davis scored 18 apiece for New Orleans, which fell to an NBA-worst 2-27.

Grizzlies 92, Jazz 82: At Memphis, Pat Gasol scored 25 points, grabbed 10 rebounds and keyed a third-quarter rally as the Grizzlies won their season-high fourth

consecutive game.

Gasol, who had 17 points in the third quarter as Memphis took the lead, was nine of 15 from the field to help send the Jazz to their sixth straight loss. Utah has dropped nine of its past 10.

Pistons 87, Bulls 80: At Chicago, Richard Hamilton scored 28 points, 20 in the second half, and Ben Wallace had 16 rebounds and seven points.

Tayshaun Prince added 15 points and Rashad Wallace scored 10 points for the Pistons, who have won five of six.

Ben Gordon gave Chicago a 70-69 lead on a jumper with 7:39 left, then Hamilton sparked a 14-4 run.

Clippers 102, Nuggets 98: At Denver, Corey Maggette had 33 points and 11 rebounds, and Rick Brunson hit a key three-pointer with 21 seconds left.

The Clippers got off to a great start at point guard in place of injured Gary Payton, had five points and hit just enough shots down the stretch to win their third time in four games after a 1-7 stretch.

76ers 112, Warriors 104: At Oakland, Allen Iverson scored 29 points, Andre Igoudala had 19 points and nine rebounds and Kenny Thomas also scored 19 points for the 76ers, who made 13 of 14 free throws in the fourth quarter to improve to 4-2 so far on an eight-game road trip — their longest in 10 years.



Air Force's Nick Welch, front, driving past Navy's Taj Matthews, had 13 points during the Falcons' 69-46 win Monday.

Defensive posture suits Air Force

Falcons force 19 turnovers in rout of Navy; home win streak hits 19

By EDDIE PELLIS
The Associated Press

AIR FORCE ACADEMY, Colo. — Antonio Hood scored a season-high 23 points and Air Force played its usual stifling defense Monday night in a 69-46 victory over Navy.

Tim Keller, trying to get out of an early season shooting slump, went 2-for-3 from three-point range and finished with nine points. The Falcons (8-5) won their 19th straight home game, the fourth-longest streak in the nation.

Air Force, which has the top-ranked scoring defense in the nation, got 31 points off turnovers, holding a young, small team from Navy (4-8) that lost for the sixth time in seven games.

Laraine Mergeron had 13 points and George O'Garra had 12 points and five rebounds for the Midshipmen, who failed in to sweep football and basketball games from their military rivals this season. Navy won the football game 24-21 in October.

Hood, a 6-foot-4 guard, did most of his damage down low, posting up and hitting a variety of turnarounds and scoop shots. He surpassed his previous season high of 17 points by making a three-point shot to give the Falcons a 35-37 lead midway through the second half.

While Hood was shining inside, forward Jacob Burtchsi handed out assists. He finished with four, three of which came in the opening minutes, all on nice passes to Nick Welch (13 points), who was cutting through the middle.

Burtchsi's last assist came after he dove for a loose ball and pushed a deft outlet pass upcourt to Hood, who made a layup as part of a 16-3 run that turned the Falcons' 10-point lead into a runaway.

Air Force played its usual slow-down, Princeton-style offense and backed it up with good defense. The Falcons, who allow 51.5 points a game, forced 19 turnovers and Dan Nwaele had three of his team's nine steals.

Navy made 50 percent of its field-goal at-

tempts, but only managed 34 shots. Junior David Hooper, Navy's second-leading scorer averaging 12.4 points a game, had only three in 21 minutes, setting season lows for points and playing time.

Led by Hood's 8-for-10 shooting, the Falcons went 24-for-40 from the floor (60 percent).

The home winning streak is impressive, especially considering where the Air Force program has been for past several decades. Last year, the Falcons won 22 games and made the NCAA tournament for the first time since 1962.

They haven't lost at Clune Arena since February 2003 and host Texas Pan-American on Wednesday before opening Mountain West Conference play at home Saturday against Colorado State.

The Falcons figure to be tested next week when they host New Mexico (13-2), then play at Brigham Young (5-8) and at Utah (11-3).

Navy opens play in the Patriot League on Saturday at Lafayette.

Utah QB Smith going pro

The Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — Quarterback Alex Smith will skip his senior year to enter the NFL Draft after leading Utah to a 12-0 record and a victory in the Fiesta Bowl this season.

Smith announced his decision Tuesday, three days after completing 29 of 37 passes for 328 yards and four touchdowns in a 35-7 triumph over Pittsburgh.

He went 21-1 as Utah's starting quarterback and finished fourth in the Heisman Trophy voting this season. The Utes' first finalist for college football's top individual award, he also was a second-team AP All-American.

Smith completed 214 of 317 passes for 2,952 yards this season, with 23 touchdowns and four interceptions.

Smith's college coach, Urban Meyer, is leaving Utah for Florida.

The 6-foot-4, 210-pound Smith has a strong arm, but will have to answer skeptics who question whether his thin build can stand up to the NFL.

Cal QB Rodgers enters NFL Draft

BERKELEY, Calif. — California quarterback Aaron Rodgers will forego his senior season to enter the NFL Draft, capping his impressive two-year transformation from a junior college star to a top pro prospect.

"I just feel like it's too big of an opportunity to pass up," Rodgers said Monday. "I'm looking forward to competing with the other quarterbacks for a chance to make an NFL team, and I'm fulfilling a childhood dream."

Rodgers passed for 2,566 yards and 24

touchdowns this season, his only full year as Cal's starter. He is seventh on Cal's career passing list with 5,469 yards.

Cal coach Jeff Tedford supported Rodgers' decision, particularly after consulting with several experts and former players who believe Rodgers could be the first quarterback taken, probably going high in the first round.

"The opportunity that he has doesn't come around all the time," Tedford said.

Okla. S. promotes Gundy to head coach; RB Morency headed to NFL

STILLWATER, Okla. — Oklahoma State promoted offensive coordinator Mike Gundy to head coach Monday, the same day his predecessor Les Miles was hired at LSU.

Gundy was the offensive coordinator under Miles for the past four seasons, helping the Cowboys average 31.5 points per game during his tenure.

The 37-year-old Gundy was Oklahoma State's quarterback from 1986-89. He holds school records for career total offense and most passing yards in a game with 429.

"It's been a long ride for me, but this is my New York Yankees job," Gundy said. "At times in our profession, people will tell you you're not supposed to ever let administration know that you're at your last stop. Well, I did have a problem with that because I'm so fired up to be here at Oklahoma State and be working with the administrators and the people we have here that I can't hardly stand it."

In other Oklahoma State news, junior running back Vernand Morency says he's turning pro because of Miles' departure.

"With coach Miles leaving, I just feel mentally and physically ready to go and make my



Utah's Alex Smith threw 32 TD passes, ran for 10 more and had only four interceptions this season while throwing for 2,952 yards.

presence felt in the NFL," said Morency, who turns 25 on Feb. 4. "There's no doubt I'm the top back in America."

Despite missing one game with a knee injury, Morency carried 250 times for 1,454 yards and 12 touchdowns during the regular season.

Clarett asks U.S. Supreme Court to hear his case

WASHINGTON — Former Ohio State running back Maurice Clarett asked the Supreme Court to reconsider his lawsuit challenging the NFL's draft eligibility rule.

The request was filed Monday, said Clarett's attorney, Alan Milstein. The NFL has 30 days to respond, and a decision on whether the case will be heard probably would come soon after.

Graham, Lucas lift Cowboys

By STEPHEN HAWKINS
The Associated Press

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas — John Lucas scored 14 of his 21 points in the final 6½ minutes of the first half, and Joey Graham sparked seventh-ranked Oklahoma State to a first start after halftime in an 86-61 victory at Texas A&M-Corpus Christi on Monday.

The outbursts by the two seniors made sure that the Cowboys (10-1), coming off a loss that dropped them four spots in this week's Top 25 poll, avoided a huge upset.

Corpus Christi (9-4), an NCAA independent in just its sixth season, hosted a ranked team for the first time and had a seven-point lead midway through the first half.

Graham scored eight points in a 13-0 run in the first four minutes after halftime to push the Cowboys ahead 44-28.

The Islanders had five turnovers in that stretch — matching their first-half total — and all but one led to points for Oklahoma State.

Graham finished with 20 points and nine rebounds for the Cowboys, who played only Big 12 games until the NCAAs.

St. John's will not participate in Big East hoop tournament

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — St. John's will not participate in the Big East tournament because of the penalties the basketball program imposed on itself earlier this season.

Big East Commissioner Mike Tranghese confirmed Monday that St. John's will not be eligible for the field and there will be one less game in the 11-team tournament. The fifth-seeded team also will receive a bye into the quarterfinals.

In November, St. John's imposed two

Sports briefs

years' of penalties — including a postseason ban for 2004-05 — after an investigation revealed former player Abe Keita was given cash by an athletic department employee.

The NCAA is continuing its investigation into the matter and will decide if the suspended penalties are enough.

The Red Storm (6-4) have already matched their victory total (6-21) from last season — the worst in school history.

Federer cruises in Aussie Open tuneup

DOHA, Qatar — Roger Federer began his Australian Open preparation by beating David Ferrer 6-1, 6-1 in less than one hour in the first round of the Qatar Open.

In the second round, the top-ranked Federer will play 1997 U.S. Open runner-up Greg Rusedski.

Victorious Hewitt rusty in Adelaide

ADELAIDE, Australia — Top-seeded Lleyton Hewitt opened his 2005 singles sea-

son with a 2-6, 6-1, 6-1 victory over French qualifier Arnaud Clement in the first round of the Australian men's hardcourt championships on Tuesday.

Hewitt had a series of early unforced errors and dropped four consecutive games in the first set. He had his rhythm in the second, taking the final five games and serving out the set with an ace.

Hewitt broke Clement with a well-placed backhand lob in the opening game of the third set and kept the momentum.



Auburn safety Junior Rosegreen is pursued by Virginia Tech players DJ Parker and Jimmy Martin (52) after an interception in the Sugar Bowl on Monday night at the Louisiana Superdome in New Orleans.

Auburn: AP poll is Tigers' only hope for share of national championship

AUBURN, FROM BACK PAGE

They didn't play like it, though. John Vaughn's three short field goals accounted for most of the scoring. Carnell Williams and Ronnie Brown, Auburn's heralded running back duo, combined for only 129 yards rushing and didn't get close to the end zone.

Williams also fumbled in the fourth quarter when the Tigers, leading 16-0, were driving for the touchdown that could have made the victory a lot more impressive. Campbell was named MVP after completing 11 of 16 passes, but had only 189 yards passing. After looking so nasty the first 30 minutes, Auburn's defense gave up two huge touchdowns, including an 80-yarder with two minutes left.

And if not for some blunders by the Hokies (10-3), Auburn wouldn't even be pleading its case right now. Virginia Tech botched two easy scoring opportunities, including a chip-shot field goal, and also missed a 2-point conversion.

The Hokies finally found their groove late in the fourth quarter, with Bryan Randall connecting with Josh Morgan on two scoring passes, including the 80-yarder with two minutes left.

Randall threw for 299 yards, but was 21-for-38 with two interceptions.

"People were expecting it to be a blowout. People were expecting Auburn to show they should be in Miami," Virginia Tech corner-

back Eric Green said. "I think they're right where they belong."

The odd team out in a troika of 12-0 teams, Auburn settled for a 5-3 win in the Sugar Bowl against the Hokies, while USC and Oklahoma were tapped for the Orange Bowl — the BCS title game.

Nothing ever seems to work out smoothly in Division I-A football, the only college sport that insists on using a mix of polls and bowls to determine its champion rather than setting things with a playoff.

Auburn's hopes were based on this convoluted scenario: The Tigers defeated Virginia Tech convincingly, Oklahoma knocked off USC in an ugly Orange Bowl and enough voters in The Associated Press media poll picked Auburn as the No. 1 team, creating another split championship.

The winner of the Orange Bowl is assured of being voted No. 1 in the coaches' poll. But the AP rankings aren't tied to the BCS.

Last season, USC was voted No. 1 by the AP after winning the Rose Bowl, while LSU won the BCS title by beating Oklahoma in the Sugar Bowl.

But when Randall threw a 29-yard touchdown pass to Morgan with 6:58 left, ruining Auburn's shutout, one could almost sense that USC, Oklahoma and — especially — the BCS were breathing a little easier.

Randall dealt another blow with his 80-yard strike. The Tigers recovered the onside kick and knelted down to run out the clock, deciding to preserve the victory rather than try to win more impressively.

"I just wanted to win by one," Auburn coach Tommy Tuberville said. "That's all that counts. If you have to win with style points, you might as well throw out all the systems."

But with three unbeaten teams so closely matched, style and points are the only way to set one apart.

Auburn blew its chance to bowl the game open in the first half, going 0-for-3 from inside the Virginia Tech 10. The Tigers had to

settle for field goals by Vaughn, who connected from 23, 19 and 24 yards for a 9-0 lead at halftime.

After taking the second-half kickoff, Auburn finally drove all the way to the end zone. The biggest play was a third-and-16, when Campbell scrambled near the Virginia Tech sideline and spotted Anthony Mik breaking open, connecting with him on a 53-yard pass.

Then, on third-and-2 from the Virginia Tech 5, Campbell froze the linebackers with play-action and hit Devin Armashodu on a quick slant over the middle for Auburn's first TD.

It would be their only one, hardly the sort of definitive statement the Tigers hoped to make with the nation — and all those crucial voters — watching.

"We're a well-rounded team that is 13-0," Tuberville said.

"We can't do so many more than what we did. So we'll accept some national championship from somebody, if anybody wants to give it to us."

Monday Sugar Bowl No. 3 Auburn 16, No. 9 Virginia Tech 13

Virginia Tech Auburn	First Quarter	0 0 13 7 0-16		
		AU	VT	
AU—FG Vaughn 23, 8:44. AU—FG Vaughn 19, 1:10.	Second Quarter			
	AU—Aromashodu 24, 1:20.			
VT—Morgan 29 pass from Randall (pass kicked), 2:50. VT—Morgan 80 pass from Randall (pass kicked), 2:50.	Third Quarter			
	AU—Aromashodu 5 pass from Campbell (Vaughn kick), 10:38.			
VT—Morgan 29 pass from Randall (pass kicked), 2:50. VT—Morgan 80 pass from Randall (pass kicked), 2:50.	Fourth Quarter			
	VT—Morgan 29 pass from Randall (pass kicked), 2:50.			

First downs	22	19	14
Passing	11	29	189
Comp. att.	21-38	11-16	10-16
Return Yards	5-3	53	53
Punts-Avg.	5-5	4-4.0	4-4.0
Fumbles-Lost	1-2	7-57	4-34
Time of Possession	31:34	28:26	33:34
INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS	Rushing	Virginia Tech	Auburn
6-16, Humes 6-12, Hamilton 1-5, Campbell 6 minus 1, team 4 minus 16.	6-16, Humes 6-12, Hamilton 1-5, Campbell 6 minus 1, team 4 minus 16.	6-16, Humes 6-12, Hamilton 1-5, Campbell 6 minus 1, team 4 minus 16.	6-16, Humes 6-12, Hamilton 1-5, Campbell 6 minus 1, team 4 minus 16.
21-28-2-29, Auburn; Campbell 11-16-1-89.	21-28-2-29, Auburn; Campbell 11-16-1-89.	21-28-2-29, Auburn; Campbell 11-16-1-89.	21-28-2-29, Auburn; Campbell 11-16-1-89.
3-126, Royal 3-31, King 3-12, Cline 1-23, Mazzetta 1-23, Humes 1-10, Hamilton 1-4, Harper 1-2, Inoh 1 minus 1-8, Auburn.	3-126, Royal 3-31, King 3-12, Cline 1-23, Mazzetta 1-23, Humes 1-10, Hamilton 1-4, Harper 1-2, Inoh 1 minus 1-8, Auburn.	3-126, Royal 3-31, King 3-12, Cline 1-23, Mazzetta 1-23, Humes 1-10, Hamilton 1-4, Harper 1-2, Inoh 1 minus 1-8, Auburn.	3-126, Royal 3-31, King 3-12, Cline 1-23, Mazzetta 1-23, Humes 1-10, Hamilton 1-4, Harper 1-2, Inoh 1 minus 1-8, Auburn.
6-16, Humes 6-12, Hamilton 1-5, Campbell 6 minus 1, team 4 minus 16.	6-16, Humes 6-12, Hamilton 1-5, Campbell 6 minus 1, team 4 minus 16.	6-16, Humes 6-12, Hamilton 1-5, Campbell 6 minus 1, team 4 minus 16.	6-16, Humes 6-12, Hamilton 1-5, Campbell 6 minus 1, team 4 minus 16.

Failures inside 20 costly for Va. Tech

By PAUL NEWBERRY
The Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Virginia Tech could have ended all the controversy, the Hokies let their chance slip away.

By dropping a pass in the end zone and missing a chip-shot field goal, Virginia Tech allowed Auburn to finish its perfect season with a 16-13 victory in the Sugar Bowl.

So, while the Tigers (13-0) pitched themselves as co-national champions, the Hokies pondered what might have been without those two glaring miscues.

"We had opportunities to win this game," quarterback Bryan Randall said. "Right now, it's definitely disappointing."

Virginia Tech (10-3) made it close at the end.

Randall connected with Josh Morgan on two touchdown passes in the fourth quarter, including an 80-yarder with 2:01 left. But the ninth-ranked Hokies failed to recover the onside kick and could only watch helplessly as Auburn ran eight plays inside the 10-yard line and came away with nothing.

Auburn's defense was impressive, picking Randall off twice — double his total in the previous seven games. But Virginia Tech ran eight plays inside the 10-yard line and came away with nothing.

Trailing 6-0, the Hokies wasted their chance to take the lead when fullback Jesse Allen dropped a short pass in the second quarter. On fourth-and-goal inside the 1, Randall faked a hand-

off to Mike Inoh and flipped a pass to Allen, who was open in the end zone. But Allen couldn't control the ball, bobbling it several times before it fell.

Randall, who had appeared to be a clear path to the end zone from the 10-yard line at the start of the fourth quarter. But as he crossed the 6, Auburn defensive back Carlos Rogers closed in fast, sending Randall on an end-over-end tumble.

When Randall came to rest — practically on his head — he was still well short of the goal line. Two plays later, Brandon Pace missed a 23-yard field goal attempt, pulling the ball wide left.

The Tigers intercepted Randall on their groove, it wasn't enough. Mikal Baaque recovered Carnell Williams' fumble and Virginia Tech drove for its first score of the night. Randall's 29-yard pass to Morgan with 6:58 left.

The Hokies went for a 2-point conversion, but Randall's incomplete pass left the score at 16-6.

The Tigers intercepted Randall on Virginia Tech's next series, but the Hokies' defense forced Auburn to go three-and-out.

On Virginia Tech's next play, Miami slipped behind Auburn's prevent defense for the 80-yard touchdown that made it 16-13.

But Auburn recovered the onside kick, one last missed opportunity.

"They gave the same kind of effort they gave all year," coach Frank Beamer said. "We just didn't have the sharpness we needed to have against a team like Auburn."

Defense: Big plays helped Tigers hold off Hokies

DEFENSE, FROM BACK PAGE

Rosegreen, often overshadowed by All-American cornerback Carlos Rogers, had several huge plays. First, he returned an interception 32 yards to set up a field goal in the first quarter.

He then had a hand literally — in Auburn's goal line stand in the second. A diving Rosegreen got a fingertip on the ball, and fullback Jesse Allen dropped what would be a sure touchdown in the end zone.

"I got up in the defense's face and let them know they weren't going to get in the end zone," Rosegreen said.

Tuberville called that stand "a key of the game."

"We made them throw the ball from the 1-yard line," he said.

"That means we had convinced them we could stop the run."

Rosegreen deflected a pass into linebacker Derrick Graves' hands to help thwart Virginia Tech's comeback try in the fourth quarter.

Randall hadn't thrown an interception in the last four games and had only one in the last seven.

After Jason Campbell's interception gave Virginia Tech the ball at the Auburn 32 late in the third quarter, the defense held again.

The Hokies converted one fourth-down play to set up first-and-goal, again from the 10.

Randall briefly appeared to have some running room, but Rogers flipped him with a nice tackle and Brandon Pace missed what turned out to be an important 23-yard field goal attempt.

Auburn's defense was supposed to be the team's big question mark after losing five stars from the front seven. The Tigers attracted so much attention for the defenders who were gone — such as linebackers Karlos Dansby and Dontarious Thomas — they gave themselves the "No-Name" tag.

They also proved a nightmare in the Southeastern Conference championship game was an aberration.

The Tigers gave up an 80-yard touchdown run to Tennessee's Gerald Riggs and allowed three rushing TDs after giving up only one in the first 11 games. The Hokies couldn't add another.

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Boggs, Sandberg elected to baseball's Hall of Fame

BY RONALD BLUM

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Wade Boggs was overwhelmingly elected to the Hall of Fame in his first year of eligibility Tuesday, and Ryne Sandberg made it with just six votes to spare on his third try.

Boggs, a five-time American League batting champion for the Boston Red Sox, was selected by 474 of the record 516 voters who are 10-year members of the Baseball Writers' Association of America.

The 91.86 percent of ballots he received was the 19th-highest percentage in Hall history, and he became the 41st player elected on his first chance.

Sandberg, the 1984 National League MVP for the Chicago Cubs, was picked by 393 voters. He appeared on 76.2 percent of ballots, just above the 75 percent cutoff (387). Sandberg received 49.2 percent of votes in 2003 and got 61.1 percent last year, falling 71 votes short.

Believer Bruce Sutter, appearing on the ballot for the 12th time, received 344 votes (66.7 percent), up from 301 last year but 43 shy of what was needed this time. He was followed by Jim Rice (307), Rick Gossage (285) and Andrew Dawson (270).

Willie McGee, also on the ballot

for the first time, received 26 votes, exactly at the 5 percent cutoff to avoid being dropped in future years. Darryl Strawberry, another first-time eligible, got six votes.

Pete Rose, ineligible for the ballot because of his lifetime ban from baseball, received nine write-in votes, six fewer than last year and his lowest total. Rose, who admitted last year that he bet on the Cincinnati Reds while managing them in the late 1980s, has been written in on 239 of 6,687 ballots (3.6 percent) over 14 years.

He must be reinstated by late November to appear on the ballot in 2006, the final year he would be eligible.

Boggs, known for his array of pre- and post-game rituals, was a 12-time All-Star during an 18-year career, finishing with 3,110 hits.

He won batting titles in 1983 and from 1985-88, becoming the first player to win the All batting championship in four straight years since Rod Carew from 1972-75. Boggs, who hit 30 or higher 15 times, finished with a .328 career average and was the only player in the 20th century with seven straight 200-hit seasons. He also became the first player to get 200 hits and 100 walks in four consecutive seasons.

A two-time Gold Glove winner

at third base, Boggs played for the Red Sox from 1982-92, then spent five seasons with the New York Yankees, helping the team win the 1996 World Series and riding a police horse around Yankee Stadium after the final victory.

His final two seasons were with his hometown Tampa Bay Devil Rays.

On Aug. 7, 1999, Boggs became the 23rd member of the 3,000-hit club, connecting off Cleveland's Chris Haney to become the first player to get No. 3,000 with a home run. After circling the bases, Boggs kissed home plate.

Sandberg was a nine-time Gold Glove second baseman and a 10-time All-Star. He hit 277 homers, the most by a second baseman at the time of his retirement, and led the NL with 40 in 1990. His .889 fielding percentage is the highest at the position.

Boggs and Sandberg will increase the Hall of Fame's membership to 260, of which 102 were selected by the BBWAA. Induction ceremonies are July 31 in Cooperstown.

Results of voting by the Veterans Committee will be released March 2. Gil Hodges, Tony Oliva and Ron Santo were among the 25 candidates on that ballot.

Among the players eligible for the first time on next year's BBWAA ballot are Orel Hershiser, Will Clark and Dwight Gooden.



Randy Johnson, 41, must reach terms on a contract extension with the Yankees before enlisting his trade to New York. Arizona will reportedly acquire Shawn Green from the Dodgers once the Johnson deal is final.

Selig's approval draws Yankees closer to Johnson

BY RONALD BLUM

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Randy Johnson is practically ready to be measured for a new uniform.

Commissioner Bud Selig gave his blessing Monday to a trade that will send the Big Unit to the Yankees, making a contract extension the last major obstacle to be resolved in the drawn-out Arizona-New York swap.

"The Yankees were given a 72-hour window to come to terms with the five-time Cy Young Award winner. Johnson's current deal pays him \$16 million in 2005 and expires after this season."

"We're just looking forward to beginning the process," said Alan Nero, one of Johnson's agents.

The Diamondbacks would receive pitchers Javier Vazquez and Brad Halsey, young catcher Dioner Navaro and \$9 million to be paid over three years.

Arizona also agreed Monday to a proposed trade that would send Navaro and other prospects to the Dodgers for Shawn Green and \$8 million. The slugger was part of a three-team, 10-player swap involving Johnson and the Yankees that collapsed Dec. 21 when Los Angeles backed out.

Selig granted the Diamondbacks a window to work out an extension for Green, who will make \$16 million this year, then can become a free agent. The windows for both negotiations will begin Tuesday and end at noon Friday EST. Diamondbacks managing partner Ken Kendrick said.

"There are obviously two separate transactions, and each has a variety of conditions that need to be met," Kendrick said. "It starts

a window of time wherein contractual matters need to be resolved, between the Yankees and Randy, and us and Randy, and us and Shawn Green."

And then, finally, a whole array of physical exams need to take place, because of the number of players involved."

Having talked about a trade since July, New York and Johnson should have a good idea about the parameters on an extension. Asked if the sides could reach an agreement this week, Nero responded: "I certainly would hope so."

Johnson, 41, was 16-14 last season on a Diamondbacks team that went 51-111, tied for the 10th-most losses in major league history.

The 6-foot-10 left-hander led the majors with 290 strikeouts, was second with a 2.60 ERA and pitched a perfect game against Atlanta, but Arizona scored two runs or fewer in 17 of his 35 starts.

Vazquez, a 28-year-old right-hander, was 14-10 with a 4.91 ERA for the Yankees. While he was picked for his first All-Star team, he won just once in his last nine regular-season starts and had a 9.53 ERA in three playoff games.

New York is giving Arizona \$3 million in each of the next three seasons to cover part of Vazquez's salary. He gets \$10.5 million in 2005, \$11.5 million in 2006 and \$12.5 million in 2007.

Navaro and pitching prospect William Juarez would go to the Dodgers as part of the Green trade, Kendrick confirmed. If the Johnson trade falls apart, Arizona would send Juarez and 23-year-old catcher Chris Snyder to Los Angeles.

AP Sports Writer Bob Bauman in Phoenix contributed to this story.

Mets brass talks with Beltran

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Four Mets executives traveled to Puerto Rico on Monday and met for four hours with Carlos Beltran, a major step in New York's push to sign another prized free agent.

General manager Omar Minaya and owner Fred Wilpon were among those who went to San Juan to visit with Beltran, agent Scott Boras, and Boras' associate, Mike Fiore. Senior vice president of baseball operations Jim Duquette and special assistant Tony Bernazard also made the trip.

"We had a very productive meeting," Boras said after the session at a San Juan hotel. Boras would not discuss whether the Mets made an offer during the meeting.

A similar trip helped Minaya and the Mets lure star pitcher Pedro Martinez this offseason. Minaya traveled to the Dominican Republic during Thanksgiving weekend and dined with Martinez, who agreed to a \$53 million, four-year contract with New York last month.

Beltran led the Houston Astros within one victory of their first World Series last season, batting .417 in the NL championship series with four home runs, five RBIs and four stolen bases. He also hit .455 with four homers and nine RBIs in the first round. The Astros would like to retain Beltran, but if they don't reach an agreement by Saturday they can't re-sign him until May 1.

Beltran also met with New York Yankees owner George Steinbrenner in Tampa, Fla., last month. The All-Star center fielder said the Detroit Tigers and Chicago Cubs have shown interest as well.

Orioles' Ponson released after a week in jail in native Arabia

ORANJESTAD, Aruba — Baltimore Orioles pitcher Sidney Ponson was released from jail on Tuesday

after being held for a week while police investigated allegations he punched a judge on a beach in Aruba.

Ponson appeared before a judge on Tuesday and prosecutors said they would not oppose his release as he awaits trial, the daily La Prensa reported. The 28-year-old right-hander faces charges of public violence and simple aggression. No trial date has been set.

Under Aruba law, a suspect can be detained for up to eight days without bail while police investigate a crime.

Ponson, who was born on the Dutch Caribbean island, allegedly punched a local judge on Dec. 25 at a beach in Boca Catalina after several people confronted Ponson, accusing him of harassing them with his personal watercraft and operating it recklessly, police said.

Yankees, Sturtz agree to one-year, \$1M deal

NEW YORK — Tanyon Sturtz and the New York Yankees agreed Monday to a one-year contract that guarantees the right-hander \$1 million.

Sturtz, the only New York player eligible for salary arbitration, gets \$850,000 this season. The Yankees have a \$1.5 million option for 2006 with a \$150,000 buyout.

The 34-year-old was 6-2 with a 5.47 ERA in three starts and 25 relief appearances for the Yankees last year and appeared in six postseason games.

Infielder R. Martinez joins Tigers

DETROIT — Free agent infielder Ramon Martinez agreed Tuesday to a one-year contract with the Detroit Tigers.

Martinez hit .246 with three homers and 30 RBIs in 102 games for the Chicago Cubs last season, playing 73 games at shortstop, 24 at third base and six at second base.

With the Tigers, he is expected to provide depth behind shortstop Carlos Guillen, third baseman Brandon Inge and second baseman Omar Infante.

MLB briefs

Chargers cast aside earlier Jets game

By BERNIE WILSON
The Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — A lot has changed for the San Diego Chargers since the mid-September afternoon when Drew Brees threw two interceptions, lost a fumble and sustained a concussion in a home loss to the New York Jets.

That's why Brees and the Chargers don't think it's likely the Jets can pull off another victory in San Diego when the teams meet Saturday night in the first round of the playoffs.

"Considering that we are night and day a different team from then till now, I think it's going to be very hard for them," Brees said Monday. "They're a good team, they know how to win, they won a lot of games. So have we."

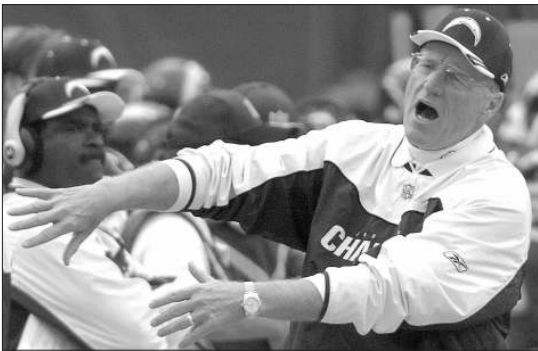
"I look at that first game and that feels like it was last season," Brees said. "It feels like it was two seasons ago. It feels so far away, just to let you know what the confidence level is, the way we feel about our team right now as opposed to then."

The Chargers were booed often by the home fans as they lost 34-28 to the Jets on Sept. 19. They lost again the following Sunday at Denver to fall to 1-2.

Since, they've won 11 of 13 games to surprise everyone except maybe themselves. They're in the playoffs for the first time in nine seasons and won the AFC West for the first time since their Super Bowl season in 1994.

Of San Diego's 12 wins, only one came against a playoff team — 20-17 over Denver here on Dec. 5. Their four losses are all to playoff teams: the Colts at home, at Denver and road games against Atlanta and Indianapolis.

"I think if you look at that, Den-



Chargers coach Marv Scottenheimer gestures on the sidelines during the San Diego's victory over Kansas City on Sunday. The Chargers say they're a different team since they lost to the Jets in the second week.



ver and the Jets, that was the second and third games of the season," Brees said. "We're a much different team than we are

now. Teams go on streaks and it takes them a little while sometimes to find their identity. Then they go."

In Brees' case, he went from almost getting run out of town to becoming a hero. He's thrown 27 touchdown passes and just seven interceptions, compared to 15 interceptions and 11 TDs last year when the Chargers were 4-12.

After losing to the Jets, the Chargers won their last seven home games. That includes a 24-17 victory over Kansas City on Sunday, when Pro Bowlers Brees, LaDainian Tomlinson and

Antonio Gates rested.

"We wanted to create that home-field advantage and make it to where when people came to San Diego, they knew that they were in for a battle," Brees said.

Fullback Lorenzo Neal doesn't make much of the Chargers' 1-4 record against playoff teams.

"It is what it is," he said. "We beat only a couple of teams with a winning record. So be it. I mean, we played the games that are scheduled in front of us. We've lost some, we've won some. Hey, let's just get it on and we'll see at the end of the day if the Chargers are for real. I like our chances."

At least 2 players scammed

By BEN NUCKOLS
The Associated Press

BALTIMORE — A 29-year-old Maryland man was charged with theft after calling NFL players Donovan McNabb, Durrell Green and Warren Sapp and convincing them to wire him money.

Lewis Sills of Elkridge, Md., faces multiple charges of theft and identity theft after stealing or trying to steal from McNabb, Sapp and Green, Howard County police said.

After persuading Green and McNabb to wire him money, Sills called Sapp, who became suspicious, police said. The Oakland Raiders' defensive lineman's financial manager contacted police, who arrested Sills after he picked up money he believed was from Sapp.

"We have not been able to determine how he was able to obtain the personal phone numbers of these players," police spokeswoman Sherry Llewellyn said. "His stories have been described as elaborate, desperate and certainly convincing enough that some of the players wired the money at his request."

According to police, Sills called Green on Dec. 17 and claimed to be Baltimore Ravens linebacker Peter Boulware. Acting as Boulware, he claimed to have a cousin named Lewis Sills and asked Green to wire \$900 directly to Sills.

Green, the former Washington cornerback, believed the story and wired the cash, which Sills picked up at a grocery store in his hometown.

Sills' next alleged target was McNabb, Philadelphia's star quarterback. This time, he claimed to be James Thrash of the Washington Redskins, a former teammate of McNabb's. He asked McNabb to wire \$600 to the Sills.

McNabb agreed, and Sills, posing as Thrash, picked up the money and signed Thrash's name on a transaction receipt, police said.

On Dec. 28, police said Sills called Sapp and claimed to be Redskins receiver Laveranues Coles. He asked Sapp to wire him \$1,800.

Sapp became suspicious, police said, and his financial manager, James Ruben, contacted police and sent \$225 to Coles at the grocery store.

Detectives were waiting outside when Sills walked in, identified himself as Coles and took the money. They confronted him and arrested him after a chase and struggle.

Police are unsure if any other players were targeted, Llewellyn said.

"We've been working with NFL security since the beginning of the investigation, so if there were additional players victimized, we would want to know about that," she said.

Broncos don't really care if odds are not in their favor

By EDDIE PELLIS
The Associated Press

DENVER — The point spread — "Indianapolis -10" — pretty much says it all.

Outside of the Denver locker room, the Broncos aren't expected to do much more than show up for their playoff game against the Colts.

They don't care, though. For most of the last two months, they've been counted out, and yet here they are, back in the playoffs, which is where they expected to be all along.

At the time the two good players step up and play ball," receiver Rod Smith proclaimed after a win Sunday over the watered-down Colts set up the Broncos for a playoff rematch.

Good players. The Broncos (10-6) have plenty of them, and when they all showed up to play this season, this team looked like a Super Bowl contender. They're Super Bowl long shots now, thanks to a 5-5 finish that included two wins at the end of the season that they needed just to qualify for the AFC's final wild-card spot.

It marked a successful close to an inconsistent season that almost always went the way John Elway wanted. Quarterback Plummer finished with 27 touchdown passes to tie a franchise record, but also shared the league lead with 20 interceptions.

Now, the task is to defeat the Colts and avenge a 41-10 loss in last year's playoffs that sat hard with Denver players through most of the offseason.

"It took me a long time to get over that game," linebacker Al Wilson said.

Instead of dwelling on that loss, the Broncos probably will focus on their two victories over the Colts in the last 13 months.

And while it's hard to gain too much confidence from the 33-14 victory Sunday against Indy's backups, Denver's 31-17 win in Indy during Week 15 last season was much more impressive.

"We know what it takes to go over there and win," coach Mike Shanahan said.

They'll need Plummer to avoid errors against a defense that ranked 29th in the league, but was successful nonetheless because it created 36 turnovers. Only Carolina and Buffalo had more.

They'll need a good running game from the offensive line and the 1-2 combo of Reuben Droughns and emerging rookie Tatum Bell. In the win last year, Denver controlled the ball for a team record 44:58 and proved that the best way — maybe the only way — to shut down Peyton Manning is to keep him off the field.

They'll need Champ Bailey to play like when the franchise cornerback he was touted as when the Broncos traded Clinton Portis to get him



in the aftermath of last year's playoff debacle. They'll need the other cornerback, Kelly Herndon, along with the rest of the secondary, to play just as well to contain Marvin Harrison, Reggie Wayne and Brandon Stokley, who became the first receiving trio in NFL history to catch 10 touchdowns each.

They'll need to make plays on defense. The Broncos finished the season ranked fourth in overall defense, but created only 20 turnovers (29th in the league) and had more than two sacks in only six games. That's why the defense never seemed as dominant as the yardage statistics suggested.

"We feel if we play our game, we'll beat anybody," Wilson said.

The question is, what, exactly, is Denver's game? Is it the kind the Broncos put together the last two weeks — efficient, few penalties, fewer turnovers — that helped them win two games by a combined score of 70-30? Or is it the team with the quarterback who led the league with 20 interceptions, and the team that scored touchdowns only 45.3 percent of the time it got inside the 20 — the fifth-worst rate in the league? That's the team that lost six times this season.

Packers, Vikings similar yet different

Teammates irked that Moss exited before final play

BY DAVE CAMPBELL
The Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — While the rest of the Minnesota Vikings were fighting to the last, Randy Moss was skulking away.

With his helmet in hand and head down, Moss slowly walked off the field Sunday while his teammates were lining up to try an onside kick with 2 seconds left. The Redskins recovered, handing the rattled Vikings a 21-18 season finale loss.

Although the play mattered little in the end, center Matt Burk took issue with Moss's quitting attitude, and confronted the receiver immediately after the game.

"It shouldn't happen, and if it happens again, that might be a problem," Burk said Monday, choosing his words carefully.

Had Minnesota recovered, the Vikings might have been able to try a Hail Mary pass — a play that Moss certainly would've been happy for — to seal a playoff spot. It was a moot point when Carolina lost minutes later, allowing the Vikings to back into the postseason. They travel to Green Bay on Sunday.

But Moss' move spoke volumes about the shattered mental state of the Vikings, who lost seven of their last 10 to finish 8-8. For his teammates and coaches noticed at the time, but television cameras caught the three-time All-Pro — who has an infamous history of attitude problems — walking into the tunnel toward the locker room.

Moss, who caught five passes for 66 yards and a touchdown in the game, had a hour-long phone conversation with Tice afterward. They talked again Monday morning in the coach's office for the same amount of time. Tice declined to comment about a possible disciplinary measure, but he indicated Moss knows he messed up.



Vikings wide receiver Randy Moss walks off the field while his teammates prepare for an onside kick with two seconds left in their loss to the Redskins on Sunday.



10:30 p.m. Sunday; AFN-A, AFN-P

Game time is Central European.

"I understand his frustration," Tice said, "but we can't let our frustrations make us make poor decisions of poor judgment."

Moss was unavailable for comment, as he has been most of the season.

"I wasn't too much worried about it," wide receiver Marcus Robinson said. "He's going to do what he's going to do, and it's not a reflection on me or anybody else."

"That's Randy Moss. He can do basically what he wants to do. Definitely, he did what he did."

Green Bay enters with momentum

BY ARNIE STAPLETON
The Associated Press

GREEN BAY, Wis. — The Green Bay Packers and Minnesota Vikings are a lot alike.

Both have prolific passing games and suspect secondaries to put on display Sunday at Lambeau Field, when the NFC North rivals face each other for the first time in the postseason.

What separates these two evenly matched teams?

"A field goal," Packers coach Mike Sherman deadpanned. "Both games. A last-second field goal."

That, and momentum.

The Packers (10-6) enter the playoffs as the NFC's hottest playoff team, having won nine of 11. They also beat the Vikings twice by 34-31.

Minnesota (8-8) backslides into the playoffs having lost seven of 10.

The Vikings insist everybody's 0-0 now and the regular season doesn't matter.

The Packers believe their emotional punch will make a difference come kickoff.

That's why Sherman played most of his starters for much of the time Sunday in the Packers' 31-14 win at Chicago even though the game meant nothing for playoff positioning.

"My biggest fear was to leave here laying an egg," he said.

That would have meant more practice time this week following on the negative rather than the positive.

"You don't want to come out here and stink it up and then try to come back next week and act like you're all good," tight end Bubba Franks said.

That's what the Vikings have to do this week after losing at Washington 21-18 on Sunday.

The Packers don't enter the playoffs on quite the roll they did a year ago, when they won four straight. But Sherman feels just as good about their chances for success this year.

"I feel good about this team. I feel very good about the fact we beat the Bears,"

Sherman said. "If we had lost that game you know everybody worries about the physical part of the game and having the players ready physically, but I think the psychological part, the psyche of the players, is equally important and when you lose a game."

"It affects you. They read about how they lost the ballgame, they hear about how they lost the ballgame. Then you have to go to win again."

The players liked Sherman's approach to the regular-season finale.

"Any regular-season game, regardless of your situation, to me is important," quarterback Brett Favre said. "I look at Denver last year when they played us. They had just beat Indy the week before and sat most of their guys and didn't play all that well. I don't think they gave it much effort and then they went back the next week and got crushed by Indianapolis [in the playoffs]."

"I just think that the morale is better. I don't see any pluses in not playing the game to win."

Right tackle Mark Tauscher said there wasn't a choice.

"I don't think we're in a position where we can rest on our laurels," he said. "Our laurels weren't that strong."

Favre might have thrown for 4,000 yards and 30 touchdowns again, but the defense allowed 33 scoring passes and managed just eight interceptions, both team futility records.

And the Packers needed any feel-good moments they could muster.

They can no longer point to a home-playoff game as a guarantee, thanks to Atlanta's upset at Lambeau Field behind Michael Vick two years ago.

The Packers, who won 6-2 record during their best since 1972, are just 4-4 at home this season with all four losses to non-playoff teams — the Bears, Giants, Titans and Jacksonville Jaguars.

"No question being at home is a big advantage," Tauscher said. "But you need to take advantage of that advantage, and up to this point we have not done that."

Saints thought four straight wins would be enough

BY MARY FOSTER
The Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — New Orleans Saints coach Jim Haslett looked shell-shocked on Monday.

Haslett rallied his team from a dismal 4-8 record to win four straight and stay in playoff contention right through the final game of the season. The Saints capped the year by upsetting the Carolina Panthers 21-18 Sunday.

But New Orleans' shot at the NFC's final wild-card spot dissolved when the St. Louis Rams beat the New York Jets.

"I still don't understand why we didn't get in the playoffs," Haslett said. "First of all, we're 6-6 conference record. Minnesota's 5-7. I think the NFL got it backward. If you go by the conference record we should get in."

By finishing in a three-way tie with St. Louis and Minnesota at 8-8, the Saints lost playoff tiebreakers to the Rams, who had a better conference record, and the Vikings, who defeated them 38-31 in Week 6, leaving New Orleans out of the playoffs for the fourth straight year.

"You taught the first team [St. Louis], who we beat," Haslett said. "Then you go back to head-to-head. I think they've got it backward."

The disappointment followed one of the Saints' best games of the year.



Saints LeCharles Bentley (65), Will Smith (91) and Colby Brockwold celebrate after a sack on Panthers quarterback Jake Delhomme. New Orleans expected to reach the playoffs.

"It was a real pleasure to watch the film," Haslett said.

Against Carolina, Deuce McAllister rushed for a season-high 140 yards, including a 71-yard run in the first quarter. Aaron Brooks played a solid game, and the offense did not commit a presnap penalty

or a turnover against a Panthers defense that had produced a league-high 38 takeaways in the previous 15 games.

The Saints' defense held Carolina to 46 yards rushing and forced three fumbles. New Orleans' pass rush, led by ends Charles Grant, Darren Howard and Will

Smith, pressured Jake Delhomme constantly and sacked him six times.

After the Panthers drove for a field goal on their opening series, the Saints forced into fumbles or punts on 10 of their next 11 possessions.

Haslett said he was unsure what his schedule was for now, or his future.

"I thought we'd be working on a game plan for Green Bay this week," he said.

At some point Haslett said he would meet with general manager Mickey Loomis and owner Tom Benson. He had no doubt he made a case for remaining as Saints coach, however.

"I think I fought for it," Haslett said. "I think our players fought for it, and our coaching staff, by our play on the field. There's not much more I can do about it."

Haslett said he challenged the players to step up late in the season, and they did.

"When we were 4-8, he said you can either come on board or get off," receiver Joe Horn said. "Come upstairs and see me if you guys don't believe we can finish 8-8 and have an opportunity to make the playoffs. Come see me and I'll help you get where you need to go."

"He said, 'Raise your hand,' and everybody raised their hand and made a commitment to ourselves to win the last four games, and we did that. That's a positive, and I think Jim did a great job."

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Auburn states its case for No. 1

No. 3 Tigers beat Va. Tech in Sugar Bowl to finish 13-0

BY NANCY ARMOUR
The Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — High above the field, a tiny handwritten sign read, "Auburn's No. 1 in my poll."

The Tigers ought to frame it, because that's likely to be the only place they're No. 1.

Needing a dominant display to keep its improbable hopes of splitting the national championship alive, the third-ranked Tigers instead limped to a 16-13 victory over No. 9 Virginia Tech in the Sugar Bowl on Monday night. Their offense was bland and their defense gave up two late touchdowns.

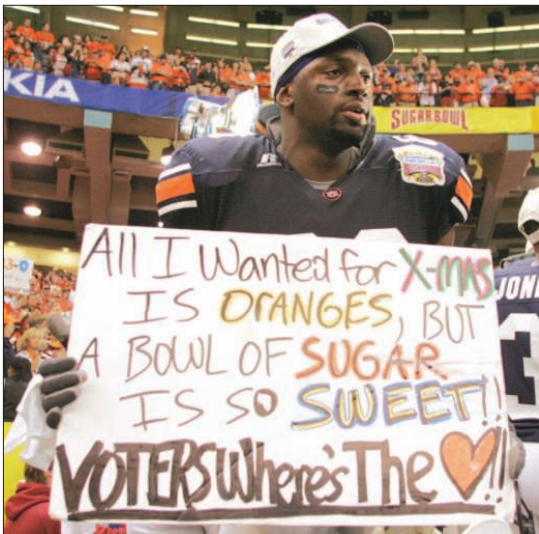
Even their postgame party was subdued, far from the raucous scene after last month's Southeastern Conference title game.

"Not having a chance to win the national championship is not a good feeling," receiver Courtney Taylor said. "We'd play the winner of the Orange Bowl at any time. We'd love to play them. But they're in the title game, and we're not."

The Tigers at least preserved their perfect season, becoming the first Auburn squad to finish 13-0. But that will be small consolation when they watch Tuesday night's Orange Bowl between No. 1 Southern Cal and No. 2 Oklahoma, knowing the winner of that game will almost certainly be the undisputed national champion.

"People just don't understand how hard it is to go 13-0," said Jason Campbell, who threw for one touchdown. "I'm not going to sit here and say we're No. 2 behind anybody. I feel like we're No. 1."

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Above, Auburn's Jay Ratliff holds a sign reflecting his thoughts after his team beat Virginia Tech 16-13 in the Sugar Bowl at the Louisiana Superdome on Monday in New Orleans. Left, Virginia Tech QB Bryan Randall was pressured into uncharacteristic mistakes, including two interceptions. Right, Auburn QB Jason Campbell (11-for-16, 189 yards, TD) was chosen as the game's MVP.

AP photos



SEC champs' defense might be best, despite two late TDs

BY JOHN ZENOR
The Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Auburn's defense, at least, made a decent case for No. 1.

Thrust into several tough situations, the third-ranked Tigers stymied No. 9 Virginia Tech and Bryan Randall for most of Monday night's 16-13 victory in the Sugar Bowl.

The nation's top scoring defense produced a little bit of everything: a goal-line stand, two key interceptions and a handful of bone-jarring tackles.

"It all comes down to defense," coach Tommy Tuberville said. "It sure did this time."

Fabulous for 53 minutes, Auburn (13-0) did have a shaky finish defensively. The close score didn't help the team's hopes of sharing the national title, but it hardly hurt the Tigers' claim that they have the best defense in the country.

Auburn gave up two touchdowns passes by Randall in the final seven minutes, including an 80-yarder to Josh Morgan with two minutes left when free safety Will Herring fell down.

Auburn's defenders more than compensated for an offense that coughed up two second-half turnovers, holding the Hokies scoreless for the first 53 minutes.

The Tigers harried Randall, the Atlantic Coast Conference player of the year, into rare mistakes and held the Hokies to 299 yards, 66 below their season average.

"We put pressure on them," safety Junior Rosegreen said. "We tried to rattle them a little bit."

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Utah QB Smith, Cal QB Rodgers decide to skip senior seasons, enter NFL Draft

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Air Force's slow-down offense, tough defense account for easy victory over Navy, 19th straight home win

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SuperSonics use three-pointers, rebounding to stop Heat's franchise-record win streak at 14

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